

THE GUARDIAN

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THE POETIC PROCESS

BY KENNETH BURKE

If we wish to indicate a gradual rise to a crisis, and speak of this as a climax, or a crescendo, we are talking in intellectualistic terms of a mechanism which can often be highly emotive. There is in reality no such general thing as a crescendo. What does exist is a multiplicity of individual art-works each of which may be arranged as a whole, or in some parts, in a manner which we distinguish as climactic. And there is also in the human brain the potentiality for reacting favorably to such a climactic arrangement. Over and over again in the history of art, different material has been arranged to embody the principle of the crescendo; and this must be so because we "think" in a crescendo, because it parallels certain psychic and physical processes which are at the roots of our experience. The accelerated motion of a falling body, the cycle of a storm, the procedure of the sexual act, the ripening of crops—growth here is not merely a linear progression, but a fruition. Indeed, natural processes are, inevitably, "formally" correct, and by merely recording the symptoms of some physical development we can obtain an artistic development. Thomas Mann's work has many such natural forms converted into art forms, as, in *Death in Venice*, his charting of a sunrise and of the progressive stages in a cholera epidemic. And surely, we may say without much fear of startling any one, that the work of art utilizes climactic arrangement because the human brain has a pronounced potentiality for being arrested, or entertained, by such an arrangement.

But the concept "crescendo" does not have the emotive value of a crescendo. To arouse the human potentiality for being moved by the crescendo, I must produce some particular experience embodying a crescendo, a story, say, about A and B, where A becomes more and more involved in difficulties with B and finally shoots him. Here I have replaced the concept by a work of art illustrating it, and now for the first time I have an opportunity of making the crescendo play upon the human emotions.

In this way the work of art is seen to involve a principle of individuation. A shoots B in a crescendo, X weathers a flood and rescues Y in a crescendo — the artist may particularize, or individuate, the crescendo in any of the myriad aspects possible to human experience, localizing or channelizing it according to the chance details of his own life and vision. And similarly, throughout the permutations of history, art has always appealed, by the changing individuations of changing subject-matter, to certain potentialities of appreciation which would seem to be inherent in the very germ-plasm of man, and which, since they are constant, we might call innate forms of the mind. These forms are the "potentiality for being interested by certain processes or arrangements," or the "feeling for such arrangements of subject-matter as produce crescendo, contrast, comparison, balance, repetition, disclosure, reversal, contraction, expansion, magnification, series, and so on." Such "forms of the mind" might be listed at greater length. But I shall stop at the ones given, as I believe they illustrate to the extent of being a definition of my meaning. At bottom these "forms" may be looked upon as minor divisions of the two major "forms," unity and diversity. In any case, both unity and diversity will be found intermingling in any example of such forms. Contrast, for instance, is the use of elements which conflict in themselves but are both allied to a broader unity (as laughter on one page, tears on the next, but each involving an incident which furthers the growth of the plot). But the emotions cannot enjoy these forms, or laws (naturally, since they are merely the *conditions of emotional response*) except in their concreteness, in their quasi-vitiating material incorporation, in their specification or individuation.

This statement can be made clearer by comparing and contrasting it with the doctrines of Plato. Plato taught that the world of our senses is the manifestation of divine law through material. Thus, he supposed certain archetypes, or pure ideas, existing in

heaven, while the objects of sensuous experience were good, true, and beautiful in proportion as they exemplified the pure form or idea behind them. Physical, or sensuous beauty, is valuable in so far as it gives us glimpses of the divine beauty, the original form, of which it is an imperfect replica.

Scholastic philosophy concerned itself principally with the problems aroused by this teaching. The divine forms were called universals, and the concept of a principle of individuation was employed to describe the conditions under which we could experience these divine forms. "*Universale intelligitur, singulare sentitur*," their position was finally stated: "We think in terms of universals, but we feel particulars," Or, to illustrate, "We may make an intellectual concept of goodness, but we can experience only some particular good thing."

Thus, the Platonic teaching was gradually reversed, and finally became branded as the representative of a typically erroneous attitude. To say that an object is good in that it reflects the divine idea, or archetype, of goodness is, according to the nominalists, the mistake of hypostatization, of mistaking a linguistic convenience for a metaphysical reality. What really happens, they say, is that we find certain objects appealing in one way or another (tasty, beneficial, mild, obedient) and in the economy of speech use the word "good" for all these aspects of appeal. And since another economy of speech is the conversion of adjectives into nouns, we next turn "good" into "goodness" and suppose that there is some actual thing, sitting somewhere, which corresponds to this word. This is to misunderstand the nature of language, they assert: and this misunderstanding results from the naïve supposition that, since each object has a word to designate it, so each word designates an object. Thus, they see no need for going from the particular to the universal; and they might, rather, define goodness as a complex of conditions in the human mind, body, and environment which make some objects, through a variety of ways, more appealing than others.

So eager were the nominalists to disavow Plato in detail, that they failed to discover the justice of his doctrines in essence. For we need but take his universals out of heaven and situate them in the human mind (a process begun by Kant), making them not metaphysical, but psychological. Instead of divine forms, we now have "conditions of appeal." There need not be a "divine contrast" in heaven for me to appreciate a contrast; but there *must be* in my

mind the sense of contrast. The researches of anthropologists indicate that man has "progressed" in cultural cycles which repeat themselves in essence (in form) despite the limitless variety of specific details to embody such essences, or forms. Speech, material traits (for instance, tools), art, mythology, religion, social systems, property, government, and war — these are the nine "potentials" which man continually re-individuates into specific cultural channels, and which anthropologists call the "universal pattern." And when we speak of psychological universals, we mean simply that just as there is inborn in the germ-plasm of a dog the potentiality of barking, so there is inborn in the germ-plasm of man the potentiality of speech, art, mythology, and so on. And while these potentialities are continually changing their external aspects, their "individuations," they do not change in essence. Given the potentiality for speech, the child of any culture will speak the language which it hears. There is no mental equipment for speaking Chinese which is different from the mental equipment for speaking English. But the potentiality externalizes itself in accordance with the traditions into which the individual happens to be born. And by education we do not mean the "awaking" of a moral, or religious, or social, or artistic sense, but the leading of such potentialities into one specific channel. We cannot teach the moral sense any more than we can teach abstract thought to a dog. But we can individuate the moral sense by directing it into a specific code or tradition. The socialists to-day imply this fact when they object to the standard *bourgeois* education, meaning that it channelizes the potentialities of the child into a code which protects the *bourgeois* interests, whereas they would have these same potentialities differently individuated to enable the proletarian revolution.

This, I hope, should be sufficient to indicate that there is no hypostatization in speaking of innate forms of the mind, and mentioning "laws" which the work of art makes accessible to our emotions by individuation. And for our purposes we might translate the formula "*universale intelligitur, singulare sentitur*" into some such expansion as this: "We can discuss the basic forms of the human mind under such concepts as crescendo, contrast, comparison, and so on. But to experience them emotionally, we must have them singularized into an example, an example which will be chosen by the artist from among his emotional and environmental experiences."

Whereupon, returning to the Poetic Process, let us suppose that

while a person is sleeping some disorder of the digestion takes place, and he is physically depressed. Such depression in the sleeper immediately calls forth a corresponding psychic depression, while this psychic depression in turn translates itself into the invention of details which will more or less adequately symbolize this depression. If the sleeper has had some set of experiences strongly marked by the feeling of depression, his mind may summon details from this experience to symbolize his depression. If he fears financial ruin, his depression may very reasonably seize upon the cluster of facts associated with this fear in which to individuate itself. On the other hand, if there is no strong set of associations in his mind clustered about the mood of depression, he may invent details which, on waking, seem inadequate to the mood. This fact accounts for the incommunicable wonder of a dream, as when at times we look back on the dream and are mystified at the seemingly unwarranted emotional responses which the details "aroused" in us. Trying to convey to others the emotional overtones of this dream, we laboriously recite the details, and are compelled at every turn to put in such confessions of defeat as "There was something strange about the room," or "For some reason or other I was afraid of this boat, although there doesn't seem to be any good reason now." But the details were not the cause of the emotion; the emotion, rather, dictated the selection of the details. Especially when the emotion was one of marvel or mystery, the invented details seem inadequate — the dream becoming, from the standpoint of communication, a flat failure, since the emotion failed to individuate itself into adequate symbols. And even the sleeper himself, approaching his dream from the side of consciousness after the mood is gone, feels how inadequate are the details for conveying the emotion that caused them, and is aware that even for himself the wonder of the dream exists only in so far as he still remembers the quality pervading it. Similarly, a dreamer may awaken himself with his own hilarious laughter, and be forthwith humbled as he recalls the witty saying of his dream. For the delight in the witty saying came first (in cause, but not in time) and the witty saying itself was merely the externalization, or individuation, of this delight. Of a similar nature are the reminiscences of old men, who recite the facts of their childhood, not to force upon us the trivialities and minutiae of these experiences, but in the forlorn hope of conveying to us the "overtones" of their childhood, overtones which, unfortunately, are be-

yond reach of the details which they see in such an incommunicable light, looking back as they do upon a past which is at once themselves and another.

The analogy between these instances and the procedure of the poet is apparent. In this way the poet's moods dictate the selection of details and thus individuate themselves into one specific work of art.

However, it may have been noticed that in discussing the crescendo and the dream I have been dealing with two different aspects of the art process. When art externalizes the human sense of crescendo by inventing one specific crescendo, this is much different from the dream externalizing depression by inventing a combination of details associated with depression. If the artist were to externalize his mood of horror by imagining the facts of a murder, he would still have to externalize his sense of crescendo by the arrangement of these facts. In the former case he is individuating an "emotional form," in the latter "technical form." And if the emotion makes for the consistency of his details, by determining their selection, technique makes for the vigor, or saliency, or power of the art-work by determining its arrangement. *)

We now have the poet with his moods to be individuated into subject-matter, and his feeling for technical forms to be individuated by the arrangement of this subject-matter. And as our poet is about to express himself, we must now examine the nature of self-expression.

First, we must recognize the element of self-expression which

*) This saliency is, of course, best maintained by the shifting of technical forms. For any device for winning the attention, if too often repeated, soon becomes wearisome. Chesterton's constant conversion of his thoughts into paradox, for instance, finally inoculates us against the effect intended. Yet any one thought, given this form, is highly salient. The exploitation of a few technical forms produces *mannerism*, while the use of many produces *style*. A page of Shakespeare can be divided endlessly into technical devices (no doubt, for the most part, spontaneously generated): shifting rhythms within the blank verse, coincidences and contrasts of vowel quantity, metaphors, epigrams, miniature plot processes where in a few lines some subject rises, blossoms, and drops — while above the whole is the march and curve of the central plot itself. Yet even Shakespeare tends to bludgeon us at times with the too frequent use of metaphor, until what was an allurements threatens to become an obstacle. We might say that the hypertrophy of metaphor is Shakespeare at his worst, and fills in those lapses of inspiration when he is keeping things going as best he can until the next flare-up. And thus, as with the music of Bach, if he at times attains the farthest reaches of luminosity and intensity, he never fails beneath the ingenious... A writer like Proust, any single page of whom is astounding, becomes wearisome after extended reading. Proust's technical forms, one might say, are limited to the exploitation of parenthesis within parenthesis, a process which is carried down from whole chapters, through parts of chapters, into the paragraph, and thence into the halting of the single sentence.

is in all activity. In both metaphysics and the sphere of human passions, the attraction of two objects has been called will, love, gravitation. Does water express itself when it seeks its level? Does the formation of a snow crystal satisfy some spiritual hunger awakened by the encroachment of chill upon dormant clouds? Forgoing these remoter implications, avoiding what need not here be solved, we may be content with recognizing the element of self-expression in all human activities. There is the expression of racial properties, types of self-expression common to all mankind, as the development from puberty to adolescence, the defence of oneself when in danger, the seeking of relaxation after labor. And there is the self-expression of personal characteristics: the development from puberty to adolescence manifesting itself in heightened religiosity, cruelty, sentimentality, or cynicism; the defence of oneself being procured by weapons, speech, law, or business; the relaxation after labor being sought in books rather than alcohol, alcohol rather than books, woman rather than either — or perhaps by a long walk in the country. One man attains self-expression by becoming a sailor, another by becoming a poet.

Self-expression to-day is too often confused with pure utterance, the spontaneous cry of distress, the almost reflex vociferation of triumph, the clucking of the pheasant as he is startled into flight. Yet such utterance is obviously but one small aspect of self-expression. And, if it is a form of self-expression to utter our emotions, it is just as truly a form of self-expression to provoke emotions in others, if we happen to prefer such a practice, even though the emotions aimed at were not the predominant emotions of our own lives. The maniac attains self-expression when he tells us that he is Napoleon; but Napoleon attained self-expression by commanding an army. And, transferring the analogy, the self-expression of the artist, *qua* artist, is not distinguished by the uttering of emotion, but by the evocation of emotion. If, as humans, we cry out that we are Napoleon, as artists we seek to command an army.

Mark Twain, before setting pen to paper, again and again transformed the bitterness that he *wanted* to utter into the humor that he *could* evoke. This would indicate that his desire to evoke was a powerful one; and an event which is taken by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks as an evidence of frustration can just as easily be looked upon as the struggle between two kinds of self-expression. We might say that Mark Twain, as artist, placed so much greater em-

phasis upon evocation than utterance that he would even change the burden of his message, evoking what he best could, rather than utter more and evoke less. Certain channels of expression will block others. To become an athlete, for instance, I must curb my appetite for food and drink: or I may glut and carouse, and regret to the end of my days the flabbiness of my muscles. Perhaps those critics, then, who would see us emancipated, who would show us a possible world of expression without frustration, simply mean that we are now free to go and storm a kingdom, to go and become Napoleons? In this they provide us with a philosophy of action rather than a method, and in the last analysis I fear that their theories are the self-expression of utterance, not a rigid system for compelling conviction, but a kind of standard for those of their own mind to rally about.

Thus, we will suppose that the artist, whom we have left for some time at the agonizing point of expressing himself, discovers himself not only with a message, but also with a desire to produce effects upon his audience. He will, if fortunate, attempt to evoke the feelings with which he himself is big; or else these feelings will undergo transformations (as in the case of Twain) before reaching their fruition in the art-work. Indeed, it is inevitable that all initial feelings undergo some transformation when being converted into the mechanism of art, and Mark Twain differs from less unhappy artists not in kind, but in degree. Art is a translation, and every translation is a compromise (although, be it noted, a compromise which may have new virtues of its own, virtues not part of the original). The mechanism invented to reproduce the original mood of the artist in turn develops independent requirements. A certain theme of itself calls up a counter-theme; a certain significant moment must be prepared for. The artist will add some new detail of execution because other details of his mechanism have created the need for it; hence, while the originating emotion is still in ferment, the artist is concerned at the same time with impersonal mechanical processes.

This leads to another set of considerations: *the artist's means are always tending to become ends in themselves*. The artist begins with his emotion, he translates this emotion into a mechanism for arousing emotion in others, and thus his interest in his own emotion transcends into his interest in the treatment. If we called beauty the artist's means of evoking emotion, we could say that the relation-

ship between beauty and art is like that between logic and philosophy. For if logic is the implement of philosophy, it is just as truly the end of philosophy. The philosopher, as far as possible, erects his convictions into a logically progressive and well-ordered system of thought, because he would rather have such a system than one less well-ordered. So true is this, that at certain stages in the world's history when the content of philosophy has been thin, philosophers were even more meticulous than usual in their devotion to logical pastimes and their manipulation of logical processes. Which is to say that the philosopher does not merely use logic to convince others; he uses logic because he loves logic, so that logic is to him as much an end as a means. Others will aim at conviction by oratory, because they prefer rhetoric as a channel of expression. While in the Inquisition conviction was aimed at through the channel of physical torture, and presumably because the Inquisitors categorically enjoyed torture. This consideration shows the poet as tending towards two extremes, or unilaterals: the extreme of utterance, which makes for the ideal of spontaneity and "pure" emotion, and leads to barbarism in art; and the extreme of pure beauty, or means conceived exclusively as end, which leads to virtuosity, or decoration. And, in that fluctuating region between pure emotion and pure decoration, humanity and craftsmanship, utterance and performance, lies the field of art, the evocation of emotion by mechanism, a norm which, like all norms, is a conflict become fusion.

The poet steps out, and his first step is the translation of his original mood into a symbol. So quickly has the mood become something else, no longer occupying the whole of the artist's attention, but serving rather as a mere indicator of direction, a principle of ferment. We may imagine the poet to suffer under an inferiority complex, to suffer sullenly and mutely until, being an artist, he spontaneously generates a symbol to externalize this suffering. He will write, say, of the King and the Peasant. This means simply that he has attained articulacy by linking his emotion to a technical form, and it is precisely this junction of emotion and technical form which we designate as the "germ of a plot," or "an idea for a poem." For such themes are merely the conversion of one's mood into a relationship, and the consistent observance of a relationship is the conscious or unconscious observance of a technical form. To illustrate:

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In *The King and the Peasant* the technical form is one of contrast: the Humble and the Exalted. We might be shown the King and the Peasant, each in his sphere, each as a human being; but the "big scene" comes when the King is convoyed through the streets, and the Peasant bows speechless to the passing of the royal cortege. The Peasant, that is, despite all the intensity and subtlety of his personal experiences, becomes at this moment Peasant in the abstract — and the vestiture of sheer kingliness moves by . . . This basic relationship may be carried by variation into a new episode. The poet may arrange some incidents, the outcome of which is that the King and the Peasant find themselves in a common calamity, fleeing from some vast impersonal danger, a plague or an earthquake, which, like lightning, strikes regardless of prestige. Here King and Peasant are levelled as in death: both are Humble before the Exalted of unseen forces . . . The basic relationship may now be inverted. The King and the Peasant, say, are beset by brigands. There is a test of personal ingenuity or courage, it is the Peasant who saves the day, and lo! the Peasant is proved to be a true King and the King a Peasant. *)

Our suppositional poet is now producing furiously, which prompts us to realize that his discovery of the symbol is no guaranty of good writing. If we may believe Jules Gaultier, Flaubert possessed genius in that he so ardently desired to be a genius; and we might say that this ratio was re-individuated into the symbol of *Madame Bovary*, a person trying to live beyond her station. This symbol in turn had to be carried down into a myriad details. But the symbol itself made for neither good writing nor bad. George Sand's symbols, which seemed equally adequate to encompass certain emotional and ideological complexities of her day, did not produce writing of such beauty. While as for Byron, we approach him less through the beauty of his workmanship than through our interest in, sympathy with, or aversion to, Byronism — Byronism being the quality behind such symbols as *Manfred*, *Cain* and *Childe*

*) This is, of course, an overly simplified example of technical form as a generative principle, yet one can cite the identical procedure in a noble poem, *Lycidas*. After repeating for so long in varying details the idea that *Lycidas* is dead while others are left behind to mourn him ("But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone...") Milton suddenly reverses the ratio:

"Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For *Lycidas*, your sorrow, is not dead."

Lycidas lives on in Heaven. Which is to say, it is *Lycidas*, and not his mourners, who is truly alive!

Harold: the "man against the sky."

This brings up the matter of relationship between the symbol and the beautiful.

This symbol, I should say, attracts us by its power of formula, exactly as a theory of history or science. If we are enmeshed in some nodus of events and the nodus of emotions surrounding those events, and someone meets us with a diagnosis (simplification) of our partially conscious, partially unconscious situation, we are charmed by the sudden illumination which this formula throws upon our own lives. Mute Byrons (potential Byrons) were waiting in more or less avowed discomfiture for the formulation of Byronism, and when it came they were enchanted. Again and again through Byron's pages they came upon the minutiae of their Byronism (the ramifications of the symbol) and continued enchanted. And thus, the symbol being so effective, they called the work of Byron beautiful. By which they meant that it was successful in winning their emotions.

But suppose that I am not Byronic, or rather that the Byronic element in me is subordinated to other much stronger leanings. In proportion as this is so, I shall approach Byron, not through his Byronism, but through his workmanship (not by the ramifications of the symbol, but by the manner in which these ramifications are presented). Byronism will not lead me to accept the workmanship; I may be led, rather, by the workmanship to accept Byronism. Calling only those parts of Byron beautiful which lead me to accept Byronism, I shall find less of such beauty than will all readers who are potential Byrons. Here technical elements mark the angle of my approach, and it will be the technical, rather than the symbolic, elements of the poet's mechanism that I shall find effective in evoking my emotions, and thus it will be in these that I shall find beauty. For beauty is the term we apply to the poet's success in evoking our emotions.

Falstaff may, I think, be cited as an almost perfect symbol from the standpoint of approach through workmanship, for nearly all readers are led to Falstaff solely through the brilliancy of his presentation. The Prince's first speech, immediately before Falstaff himself has entered, strikes a theme and a pace which startles us into attention. Thereafter, again and again the enormous obligations which the poet has set himself are met with, until the character of this boisterous "bed-presser" becomes for us one of the keenest experiences in all literature. If one needs in himself the itch of

Byronism to meet Byron halfway, for the enjoyment of Falstaff he needs purely the sense of literary values.

Given the hour, Flaubert must share the honors with George Sand. But when the emphasis of society has changed, new symbols are demanded to formulate new complexities, and the symbols of the past become less appealing of themselves. At such a time Flaubert, through his greater reliance upon style, becomes more "beautiful" than Sand. Although I say this realizing that historical judgements are not settled once and for all, and some future turn of events may result in Sand's symbols again being very close to our immediate concerns, while Flaubert might by the same accident become remote: and at such a time Flaubert's reputation would suffer. In the case of his more romantic works, this has already happened. In these works we feel the failures of workmanship, especially his neglect of an organic advancement or progression, a neglect which permits only our eye to move on from page to page while our emotions remain static, the lack of inner coordination making it impossible for us to accumulate momentum in a kind of work which strongly demands such momentum, such "anticipation and remembering." This becomes for us an insurmountable obstacle, since the symbols have ceased to be the "scandals" they were for his contemporaries, so that we demand technique where they inclined more to content themselves with "message." And thus only too often we find the Temptations of St. Anthony not beautiful, but decorative, less an experience than a performance.

Yet we must not consider the symbol, in opposition to style, as outside of technical form. The technical appeal of the symbol lies in the fact that it is a principle of logical guidance, and makes for the repetition of itself in changing details which preserve as a constant the original ratio. A study of evolution, for instance, may be said to repeat again and again, under new aspects, the original proposition of evolution. And in the same way the symbol of art demands a continual restatement of itself in all the ramifications possible to the artist's imagination. *)

*) It is usually in works of fantasy where this repetition of the symbol under varying aspects can be followed most easily. In *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, the ratio of discrepancy between Gulliver and his environment is repeated again and again in new subject-matter. The ratio of the *Odyssey* is ramified in a manner which is equally obvious, being, we might say, the discovery of the propositions which were, for Homer, inherent in the idea of "man in the wide, wide world." In its purity, this repetition of the symbol's ratio usually makes for episodic plot, since precisely this repetition is the *primum mobile* of the story. Baudelaire's sonnet, *La Geante*, is a perfect instance of the episodic in miniature. Thus: in

In closing: We have the original emotion, which is channelized into a symbol. This symbol becomes a generative force, a relationship to be repeated in varying details, and thus makes for one aspect of technical form. From a few speeches of Falstaff, for instance, we advance unconsciously to a synthesis of Falstaff; and thereafter, each time he appears on the stage, we know what to expect of him in essence, or quality, and we enjoy the poet's translation of this essence, or quality, into particulars, or quantity. The originating emotion makes for *emotional* consistency within the parts; the symbol demands a *logical* consistency within this emotional consistency. In a horror story about a murder, for instance, the emotion of horror will suggest details associated with horror, but the specific symbol of murder will limit the details of horror to those adapted to murder. *)

The symbol faces two ways, for in addition to the technical form just mentioned (an "artistic" value) it also applies to life, serving here as a formula for our experiences, charming us by finding some more or less simple principle underlying our emotional complexities. For the symbol here effects us like a work of science, like the magic formula of the savage, like the medicine for an ill. But the symbol is also like a "message," in that once we know it we feel no call to return to it, except in our memories, unless some new element of appeal is to be found there. If we read again and again some text-book on evolution, and enjoy quoting aloud pages of it, this is because, beyond the message, there is style. For in addition to the symbol, and the ramifications of the symbol, poetry also involves the *method of presenting* these ramifications. We

the more exuberant days, when nature created monsters, the poet would have liked to live with a giantess, like a cat with a queen; he would have peered into the fogs of her eyes; he would have crawled over the slope of her enormous knees; and when, tired, she stretched out across the countryside, he would have "slept nonchalantly beneath the shadows of her breasts, like a peaceful hamlet at the foot of a mountain."... This same deduction is, of course, at the bottom of every successful art-work, although where accumulation is more in evidence than linear progression (incidents of plot being "brought to a head") these simple ratios are more deeply embedded, and thus less obvious. In his monologues, his conversations with the ghost, with Polonius, with Ophelia, with his mother—in each of these instances Hamlet repeats, under a new aspect, the same "generative ratio," that symbol and enigma which is Hamlet. "A certain kind of person" is a static symbol; a murder is a dynamic one; but beneath the dynamic we will find the static.

*) Some modern writers have attempted, without great success, to eliminate the symbol, and thus to summon the *emotional* cluster without the further limitation of a *logical* unity. This is also true of modern music. Compare, for instance, the constant circulation about a theme in classical music with the modern regard of this "arbitrary" unity. As story to-day gravitates towards lyric, so sonata gravitates towards suite.

have already shown how a person who does not avidly need the symbol can be led to it through the excellence of its presentation. And we should further realize that the person who does avidly need the symbol loses this need the more thoroughly the symbol is put before him. I may be startled at finding myself Faust or Hamlet, and even be profoundly influenced by this formulation, since something has been told me that I did not know before. But I cannot repeat this new and sudden "illumination." Just as every religious experience becomes ritualized (artistic values taking the place of revelation) so when I return to the symbol, no matter how all-sufficient it was at the first, the test of repetition brings up a new factor, which is style.

"What we find words for," says Nietzsche, "is that for which we no longer have use in our own hearts. There is always a kind of contempt in the act of speaking." Contempt, indeed, so far as the original emotion was concerned, but not contempt for the act of speaking.

THE WATER COLORS OF C. KAY-SCOTT

BY ROGER FRY

To paint a water color is one of the most perillous and at the same time the most seductive adventures that the artist can affront.

Water color, it is true, is one of the oldest of techniques; but until the 19th century it was understood in a limited sense. It was used in the form of a tinted drawing either to indicate the play of light and shade as in Poussin's and Rembrandt's water colors, or to indicate local color as in Albert Durer's and many of the Primitives'.

In this sense the water color was in the nature of a document: it was ancillary to some other more ultimate statement. In such a limited and subordinate sphere water color is one of the most natural and least difficult of methods, since the selection imposed by the pursuit, either of light and shade, or of local color, are selections readily made and can be carried out with the greatest ease.

But the comparatively modern notion of the water color as a substantive and final expression is another matter altogether. The first necessity of water color technique is an avaricious economy of means. This presented no difficulty in the older water color; but when the artist aims at a total effect wherein light and shade and color, atmospheric as well as local, each claim their part, the selection imposed by the medium becomes a grave matter. It means in effect that for each one of the comparatively limited number of washes which compose the design a separate interpretation must be found, and an interpretation which summarizes as completely as possible the infinity of nature.

And here at once the artist is beset by the peculiar temptation of his medium. The peculiar seductive charm of water color comes from the quality of a pure tint lightly and frankly washed on to the paper. The slightest revision or hesitation destroys this fragile bloom. The artist thus is tempted to ask no more of nature than the hint or justification for a few such delicate washes harmoniously juxtaposed. He knows by bitter experience that any attempt to probe deeper into the nature of his vision is a threat to that spontaneous elegance, and menaces a muddy and labored surface.

It is just because Mr. Kay-Scott risks disaster in every one of his drawings that they interest and move me. No one who looks at the work of this artist can doubt that Mr. Kay-Scott has a per-

fect sense of the peculiar charm of his medium, and yet it is clear that he was never turned aside from the pursuit of those aspects of his vision which seem most irreconcilable with its insistent claims.

Take his color for instance: — it is his particular vision of the particular scene and not his paint box which determines the whole color scheme. This sounds elementary, but how many much-admired drawings owe their charm to the happy accidents of the paint box which play a role not unlike that of the accidents of rhyme with some poets!

For Mr. Kay-Scott's color schemes are fixed in no ready-made and well worked clefs. They depend as often as not on the subtlest interplay of hardly contrasted neutrals. The brilliance and luminosity comes from that interplay and not from the brilliance of the colors used. Nor does he repeat his *trouvailles*; every time he starts afresh ready to accept from the thing seen the hints for a new and as yet untried system.

Moreover his color schemes are not merely so many agreeable and harmonious notes which build up a decorative equilibrium within the firm rectangle. His color is functional and imaginative. It excites to a fuller recognition of plastic unity and inspires a mood — a mood which, again, is not imposed wilfully but which emerges from the whole vision, from the total plastic and spatial interplay.

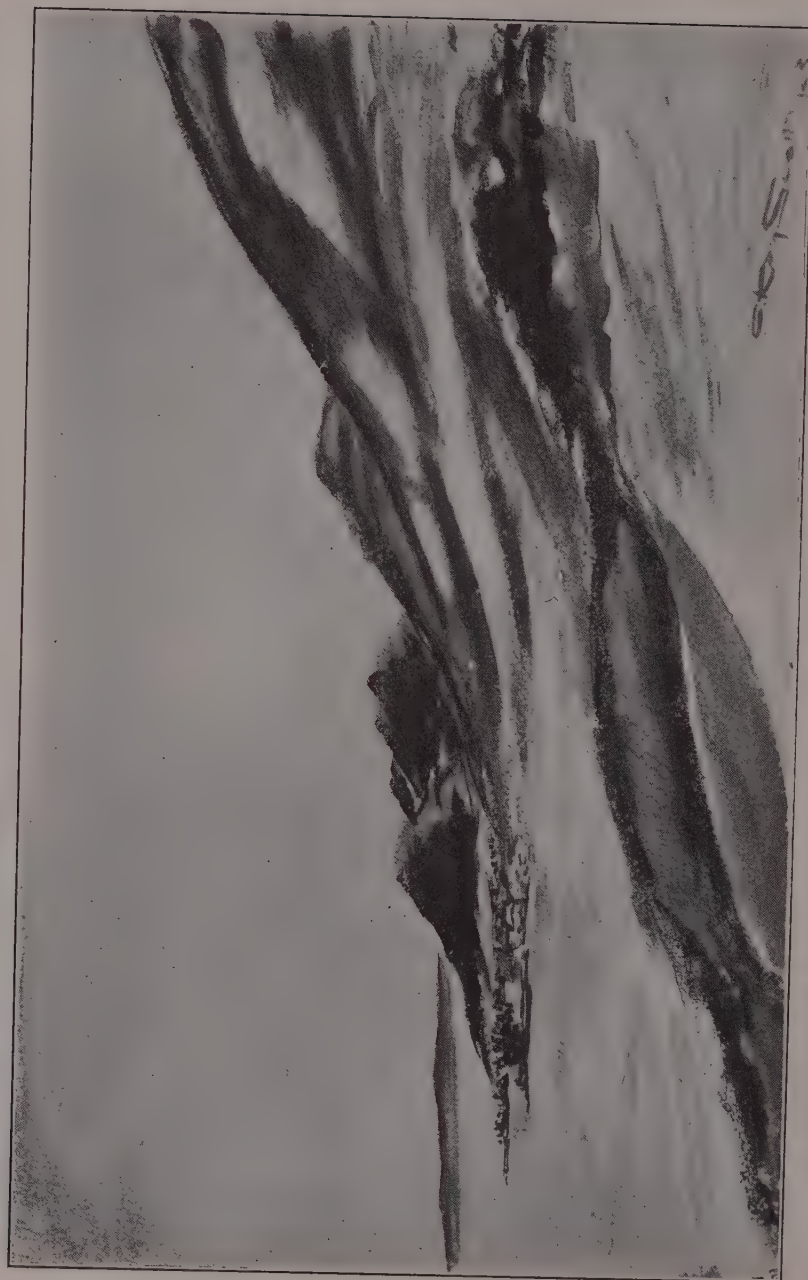
And this leads me to what I take to be the fundamental character of these drawings: — the research for definite and global constructions, for an architecture of planes moving within a definitely apprehended space. Such a term to his researches is an ambitious one for the painter in oils who can, within limits, reconstruct and recombine at leisure; but how few aquarellists have ever put it before themselves as a possible goal! In nearly all these drawings such a definite construction seems to me to be more or less clearly attained, and attained by loyal and unequivocal means.

I am not surprised to learn from one who has worked with Mr. Kay-Scott that comparatively few of his sheets come to completion and fewer still to exhibition. Such an exacting aim as he has set before himself demands the sacrifice of many failures. It is only the formularist who can count on success with the same assurance that the carpenter feels about making a table. An artist like Mr. Kay-Scott is playing a quite different game, and a vastly more entertaining one.



BY C. KAY-SCOTT

TROPICAL SCENE



TROPICAL SCENE

BY C. KAY-SCOTT

JASON AT CORINTH

BY JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Cracked, yellow, blistering,
Salt-caked and gaping — every plank a wreck —
Between the eastern and the western seas,
Her prow pushed forward to the rising sun,
There stands the ship, the first ship made with hands:
The mother of the fifty men who bore
Her on their shoulders, nine days over the earth,
Between the inner and the outer sea.

And now their sons
Are setting out for Troy. At Aulis gather
A thousand ships — black-sailed, vermillion-prowed,
But none of my blood in them. I have naught,
Nor wife nor child nor kin nor friend nor home;
Only this staring wreck
Where the rocks part the seas.

Only this wreck at last,
Rotting and nude and huge,
And strength that fails in me,
Snapping like these old beams;
A dream of Colchis and the Golden Fleece
Which other men have long forgot,
A memory that fades and dies
In one old weary brain.

The sea is whispering to the young men's blood
No more of my strange wandering;
It breaks into another song,
Of Troy's high walls and Helen's face,
And Priam's house of gold.
Had I but known which of two ways to choose,
I would have taken the safe, easy way;
Assumed my kingship, married, and had sons,

The GUARDIAN

Traded in easy seas and sent at last
A hundred sail to equal Agamemnon's
Best-fitted host.

But now
This is the end, the very end, the last
Of striving and the limit of my pain.
The Gods have hidden this from me till now,
But now I see the pathway I have trod,
Marked with grey milestones — blood and shame
and tears —
Straggle at last, and stop. The House of Sleep

Is open by the all-forgetting sea.
And there I soon shall rest. No one will sing
Of me as of Achilles and those men
Now going to their doom. But yet, at times,
Some men will speak of me in casual talk,
And wondering what it was that stood between
Me and my thwarted purpose, say this word:
"So many toils he faced to lose his quest;
So many griefs he found ere grief could sleep."

ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT

BY JAMES STEPHENS

CHAPTER VI.

So a weary brain thinks weary thoughts; and so I thought; separating myself languidly from the business of those who were making me a partner in their affairs. All I desired was that the explanations should cease, and that I might heave myself into a saddle and jog quietly to my own place.

But I knew, almost with sickness, that I could not go until this sentence had been explained and re-explained. They would inevitably consider that I could not grasp its swollen import until they had spoken under it and over it; and explained that there was a necessity for it; and detailed me that also.

I could foresee a dreary hour that would drone and drone with an unending amplification of duty and interest and love, and a whole metaphysic to bind these together.

Love! They would come to that at last. But when they dared the word they would not leave it while they had a tooth to put into it.

They would tell me around it and about; and the telling would excite them to a fury of re-telling. I should have its history, and all the din and crackle of all the words that could be remembered on that subject or germain to it.

I found it happen so.

I was initiated into the secrets of their duty to their people and to themselves. I learned the intricacy of the interests wherein all parties were involved; until it was impossible to tell where duty ended and interest began. And, in the inevitable sequel, I was the confidant of their love. And I listened to that endless tale with the drowsy acquiescence of one moonstruck and gaping . . . drowsily nodding . . . murmuring my yes and yes, drowsily . . .

They were good to me. They were sisterly and brotherly to me. By no hairsbreadth of reticence was I excluded from their thoughts, their expectations, their present felicity, and their hopes of joy to come. For two people going alone may have verbal and bodily restraint, but the company of a third will set them rabid.

It is as though that unnecessary presence were a challenge, or a query, which they must dispose of or die. Therefore, and because of me, they had to take each other's hand. They had to fondle paw with paw; and gaze searchingly on each other and on me; with, for me, a beam of trust and brotherliness and inclusion which my mood found sottish.

They were in love.

They whispered it to each other. They said it loudly to me. And more loudly yet, they urged it as though they would proclaim it to the moon . . . And about their hands was a vile activity; a lust of catching; a fever of relinquishing; for they could neither hold nor withhold their hands from each other.

"Do they expect me to clasp their hands together, and hold them so that they shall not unloose again? Do they wish me to draw their heads together, so that they may kiss by compulsion? Am I to be the page of love and pull these arms about each other?"

We walked on, heedless of time; and I heedless of all but those voices that came to me with an unending, unheard, explanation; the voices of those who cared naught for me; who cared only that I was there, an edge to their voluptuousness.

CHAPTER VII.

But when one walks one arrives somewhere. If the environment had not changed we might have gone on for ever. This walk and talk had grown into us like a monstrous habit from which we could not break away; and until a change came to the eye our minds could not swerve from the world they were building, nor our feet from the grasses we walked on.

A change did occur, mercifully; the little variety which might detain that level of moonbred, lovesick continuity or inertia; for we think largely through the eyes, or our thoughts flow easily to the direction in which our gaze is set.

The great park, waving with separated trees, came abruptly to an end.

At this step it was yet a sward. But ten paces beyond it was a tumble of bush and rock, unkempt as a beggarman's beard. Everywhere there were bits of walls with crumbling ledges, up which the earth was gradually mounting, and which the grass had already conquered.

Under the beam of that great flat moon the place seemed wildly beautiful; with every mound a glory of silver and peace, and every hollow a pit of blackness and mystery. A little beyond, perfect, although in the hub and centre of ruin, a vast edifice reared against the sky, and it shone white as snow in the moonlight, except where a projecting battlement threw an ebon shade.

"The old castle," said she; "I have not walked this way in ten years."

And saying so, she walked to it.

I had never been that way, and I looked on that massive pile of silence almost with expectation, as though a door might open and something emerge, or a voice roar rustily at us from the moon-clad top.

It was old, and it was built as they built of old, and built no more; for the walls were fifteen feet thick, and time might have sat before it through half eternity, marvelling by what arts such a solidity could be reduced.

We paced about it, wondering at it, and at the silence which came to and from it; and marvelling that men had with such patience consummated so vast a labor; for the lives of generations had passed before this was ended and secure.

There was but one door, and we came on this in our silent walk. It was swung to, but was yet open just a little; barely a whole foot of opening; a dense black slit in the moonlight.

"I must slip in," said she.

He smiled at her, catching again her hand. And into his ear, but with her eyes fixed on mine, she said:

"I want to whisper something in the ear of silence and desolation."

She slipped within; and, when in, she pulled at his hand. With a look at me, half-laughing, half-apologetic, he squeezed after her; and I was alone, staring at the bossed and plated door.

CHAPTER VIII.

There was silence without and within, but I found that my eyes were fixed on that silence within; and from it, as I expected, almost I willed, there came, as though bred from the silence, a sound. It was ten times more discreet than a whisper, and was to be heard only by an ear that knew it would come.

A sudden panic leaped within my heart and rolled into my ears like a beaten drum; and that rage of fear was my memory, sprung suddenly from nowhere, of the hands that had gripped and released each other; of the eyes that had flashed upon eye and lip; of the bodies that had swung tenderly sideways and fell languidly away again.

And at that my mind emptied itself of thought, and I saw nothing, heard nothing, was nothing. Only in my head there came again a sudden great throb as though a muffled bell had thudded inside it. My hands went out without any direction from me; they gripped on the door; and, with the strength of ten men, I pulled on it.

It fell to with a crash that might have been heard about the earth; and yet which let through one infinitesimal fraction of sound; a beginning of sound only; so tiny, it could scarcely be heard; so tense that the uproar of doom could not have covered that sound from my ear.

It began, and it never finished, for it never continued. Its beginning was caught and prevented; but within my ear it continued and completed itself, as a scream which I should never cease to hear; while still with hanging jaw and fixed eyes I stared at the closed door.

I walked away.

I turned from the place and went slowly in the direction we had come.

I was a walking statue; a bodily movement only; for the man within had temporarily ceased to be. Within I was a silence brooding on silence and darkness. No smallest thought or stir towards thinking crept in my mind; but yet I was not quite as a dead man walking, for something was happening . . . I was listening. I was listening for them to scream in my heart. . . .

And then I began to run; a steady pelt of running, as though I could run away from them, mewed in that stony den, and yet liable to shriek on me from the centre of my being.

Again the change to the eye brought change to the mind; and when I sighted the great building, all glimmering with lights, I came to my breathless self.

I went to the stables; found my man; and in five minutes was in the saddle, and, with him behind, went plunging through the darkness towards my own place.

How often during that ride did I clench my hand to pull on the rein and go back to release them. Every minute, every second, I was going to do it. But every minute, every second, my hand refrained from pulling on the horse, and my heels gave her notice to go yet faster.

For I was not quite a man. I was an inertia . . . or I was the horse. I was something that ran; and my whole being was an unexpressed wish to run and never stop. I did not even wish to come to my place; for, arriving there, I must halt and dismount, and fumble and totter among obstacles of doors and people. . . .

That halt had to come; I dismounted in a mood that merged rapidly from impatience to anger, and from that to almost blind fury. In a little while my dispositions were made, and I was on the road again on a fresh beast, a bag of money and valuables strapped on the nag, and behind me two servants coming on at a gallop.

I was running away from the country. I was running away from those two mewed up in the prison, to which nobody knew they had gone. But more urgently even than that, I was running away from myself.

CHAPTER IX.

There comes an interval which my recollection would figure as ten or twelve years. During this time I did not return to my own country, and, so far as was possible, I did not even think of it.

For it was in my nature to forget easily; or, by an effort of the will, to prevent myself remembering whatever I considered inconvenient or distressing. I could put trouble to one side as with a gesture, and this trouble I put away and did not again admit into mind.

But a trouble that is buried is not disposed of. Be the will ever so willing, the mind ever so obedient, a memory cannot be destroyed, until it has reached its due time and evolved in its proper phases.

A memory may die in the mind as peacefully as an old man dies in his bed; and it will rest there tranquilly, and moulder into true forgetfulness, as the other debris moulders into dust. But a memory cannot be buried alive; for in this state of arrested being, where it can neither grow old nor die, it takes on a perpetual unused

youth; and lies at the base of one's nature as an unheard protest; calling to the nerves instead of to the brain, and strumming on these with an obstinate patience and an unending fertility of resource.

It has been banished from the surface to the depths; and in the deep of being, just beyond the borders of thought, it lies, ready as at the lifting of a finger to leap across these borders, as new and more poignant than at its creation.

Upon those having the gift of mental dismissal a revenge is taken: they grow inevitably irritable; and are subject to gusts of rage so unrelated to a present event that their contemporaries must look upon them as irresponsible.

A buried thought, like a buried body, will rot; and it will spread a pestilence through the moral being that is its grave or its gaoler.

It was so with me.

From being one frank and impetuous and careless, I became moody, choleric, suspicious; and so temperamentally unstable that as I could not depend on myself, so no one else could depend on me either.

All things that were commenced by me had to be finished by another; for in the very gust and flooding of success I would throw myself aside from it; or bear myself so outrageously that my companions would prefer failure and my absence to a success which had me within a league of the prize.

Everything, even a memory, must be faced at last. No man can rest until he has conquered or surrendered to his enemy; for, be success attained or failure, a legitimate bourne is reached, wherein the mind may acquiesce and be at one with the result.

So, one day, I unburied my dead; looking upon it with a curiosity and fear which were the equal of each other; and having once looked, I could not forbear to look again; until I became a patient, timid devotee of my own evil.

A treacherous story in truth; and if repentance could have retrieved my crime, how quickly it had been erased. But the fact of repentance comes home only to the person in fault. It has no value for the victim; for a man may outrun the laws of man, but the law of his self he can neither distance nor dodge.

Half the value of an act is its reaction; for the one pays and completes the other. My act was vanity, and here came shame to make of it a total; and there, in the mixture of the two, was I,

fully expressed and condemned. Vanity had sentenced me to shame; and shame would take up the tale again with vanity, and would lead me to the further justice of which I had need. For that which we do outwardly we do inwardly. We condemn or reward ourselves in every action; and the punishment we receive is due to us in a sense deeper than that indicated in the word retribution.

I thought of those two; and I thought of them shyly as one who had no longer the right even to remember them. For they had counted on my nature as they judged it; on my honor as they knew it; and on my friendship as they thought to have proved it. But into these aspects of me they had been sucked as into a bog. I had given way under their feet, and they had sunk into and died in me.

Was it a wonder that I fled across the fields fearful lest they might scream to me from my soul? Alas, it was there they had been betrayed, and there were buried; wherever else their bones might whiten.

CHAPTER X.

And now I began to brood on them deeply and perpetually, until nothing in the world was so important as they were, and they became me almost in my entirety.

I reconstructed them and myself, and the happy days which had preceded that most wicked of hours; and I knew that whatever other enmity or suspicion had been in the world, there had been nought but friendship between us and the frankest and freest trust. I had reason to trust them, and had given them occasion to believe that in my keeping their honor and their all was safe; and to that trust I had given the lie at the moment when it was reposed.

Indeed, I was stupefied to think that I had committed this baseness; for on behalf of these two I would have counted on my own loyalty with as little calculation as they had.

There was, indeed, something to be said for me if that enquiry were rigorously pursued. But it was a poor thing to be advanced in my favor, for it could not be urged.

She had halted between us for a long time; not balancing our values or possibilities; but humanly unwilling to judge, and womanly unable to wound. That delicate adjustment could not have continued indefinitely; but it could have continued longer had I not forced the issue, or stated the position; and once a case is truly stated

nothing remains but the judgment which is already apparent in the statement.

It was I had failed in the trial. I whose nerves gave way. I who became impatient and would gamble on the chance; and the gambler is always an incomplete man. In all real things the gambler must lose, for he is staking on chance that which can only be won by the knowledge which is concreted merit; and in all memorable deeds the personality must win, and chance has not even the ghost of a chance.

They had bettered me; and, although they were dead and I alive, they were beyond me and topped me as a lion tops a dog.

So, pride having proved to me that I was treacherous, shame came to teach me the great lesson of life; for in humility the mind it released from fleshy fogs and vapors; and in that state only can it be directed to its single natural work, the elucidation of character.

Ideas which enter the mind only have no motive force — they are alive, but have not yet energy. They exist but as subjects of conversation, as intellectual gossip; but before a thought can become an act it must sink deeper than the mind and into the imagination, where abides the true energy of all thinking creatures. It is not the mind of imagination that sets the will to work; and both mind and will obey it instantly, as a horse winces instantly to the touch of a spur.

So these two, having got into my imagination, could not be let out again until it was satisfied that all which could be done was done, and a moral as well as logical end arrived at.

I took to horse, therefore, and set out for home.

CHAPTER XI.

Apart from my adventure with those people my memory is blurred. My dealings and encounters with them are distinct as though they happened to-day; but the portions of the narrative interspersing that adventure have already more than half faded from memory. Yet it seems to me that my journey back was a long one, and that ships had to be taken as well as horses ere I had returned and could recognize landmarks and faces.

In many of these the passage of time was marked for me as though it had been written.

Here was a dwelling which had not before been here: and in this place, where a house had been, there was a roofless ruin.

Here a man tended his sheep. When I passed the last time he had not been old; but his beard had whitened as though in one night of snow.

I passed youths and girls who knew me and stood aside; but they had changed from children I might have remembered into lusty and lengthy and unknown people.

The word that I was coming must have far preceded me, for these people recognized me with curiosity, but without astonishment; and in my own house I was clearly expected and welcomed with all the preparedness a master might hope for.

I had not hoped for any welcome, and would have preferred to come back as anonymously as a bird does who returns to its last year's hedge; for, although I did not wish to escape anything that might be in keeping for me, I did desire to inform myself of the circumstances by which I should be surrounded, and the dangers that I might have to front.

There was no hint of danger or disquietude among my people. Their welcome was as free, their service as easy and accustomed as though I had returned from a visit to the next town. And the marvel of this almost stupefied me; while the impossibility of demanding direct information from those unsuspecting people plunged me in dismay.

I thought to myself—"The bodies have never been found, and, by some extraordinary chance, suspicion has not turned upon me for their disappearance."

At the thought a weight was lifted from my soul, but only for a moment; for I had not come back in search of security, but in order that whatever debt was due by me should be paid.

But I had to know how things were, and, after eating, the man of whom I enquired, butler, factotum, whatever he was, replied that my return was known at the Castle (as I shall call it), and that a visit from them was expected on the next day to welcome me home.

CHAPTER XII.

With this news my alarm vanished and an almost excessive joy took its place. My mind lightened and poured into my body, as from a fountain, well being and energy.

For how long? Was it more than ten minutes? Ten seconds? The mind that can hold joy must be strong indeed. I could no more contain it than I could round the sea in my palm; and, almost

as it had swirled into me, it swept out; leaving behind only that to which I had a right and which was my own.

Nothing happens without mental acquiescence, and that which emptied my mind of joy and my body of buoyancy was the memory that I should see them on the morrow, and, with that memory, egotism pushed up its head, and I thought—"They shall not meet the unfledged youngster they parted from!"

That was all. But it was sufficient to ride me as I would ride a horse, and to pull me round to its direction, and to the vanity I imagined to have left behind.

I chid myself for a fool. I looked back with a lightning eye on the wasted years; the useless misery; the unnecessary toil and sordid excitement through which I had passed; and at a stroke my mind became filled with a tumult and admixture of emotions which no one word would synthesise, nor could I describe them in many words.

In undisciplined minds a conflict of thought will provoke anger or sleep; but in almost any mind a conflict of emotion will breed rage; and, for the mind is lazy, a thought will seek for an emotion to rest in, and will lie in it as in a bed. So nobility rots in dream, and action grows stagnant in imagining itself. Behind life is laziness, and from it, in direct ascent, is emotion and lust and anger, which master words describe up to a point the world and its working.

Thus, having torn myself out of anger as from a pit, I hurried back to it, and I found that I was thinking of my coming visitors with a dislike which was as near to hatred as I could arrive at.

They were alive, and I had paid for their death! I had wasted myself and my years grieving for them; repenting for them; idealizing them in a dull torment and agitation of nerve and brain!

For nothing! And nothing became symbolized by them. They stood for it; they were Nothing; and, with that, vanity was in possession again, for I stood for something as against their nothing; and all the coil of pride and shame and payment had to recommence.

CHAPTER XIII.

They came, and for a time resentment was covered by curiosity; and while we talked together I found myself glancing at one and the other with the curiosity of him who peeps at a camel or a criminal.

There was a difference in them, but it was not essential; it was

only the change which comes with the passage of time.

All that I remembered was here, but more pronounced. What had been quietude had deepened to tranquility. All that sense of certainty and command was more certain and commanding, for ease and power and good humor was as unconsidered and native a part of them as their limbs.

He had been great in bulk, he was now huge. He had filled out, and filled in, and he strode and towered like a mountain.

Her I remembered as one remembers a day of April beauty and promise, various with that uncertainty which troubles and delights. Now summer was on her with all its gorgeous endowment.

She was a rest to the eye. She was a benediction to the senses. She calmed desire. For to look on her was to desire no more, and yet to be satisfied. Her beauty was so human, her humanity so beautiful, that she could embrace the thought that would embrace her; and return it absolved, purified, virgin again to the lust that sent it out.

There are people in the world who are secured against every machination of evil. They live as by divine right, as under divine protection; and when malice looks in their faces it is abashed and must retreat without harming them; all the actions of these are harmonious and harmless and assured; and in no circumstance can they be put in the wrong or turned from their purpose. Their trust is boundless, and, as they cannot be harmed, so it cannot be betrayed. They are given their heaven on earth as others are here given their hell; and what they get they must have deserved; and they must, indeed, be close to divinity.

Of such were these, and I hated them with a powerlessness which was a rage of humility; and I mourned for myself as the hare may mourn who is caught in a trap and knows that it will kill him.

I did not hate them, for they could not be hated. My egotism envied them. My shame, and, from it, my resentment, was too recent to be laid, though the eyes of a dove looked into mine and the friendliest hand was on my shoulder. Something obstinate within my soul, something over which I had no charge, stiffened against them; and if one part of my nature yearned for surrender and peace, the other part held it back, and so easily that there was never a question as to where obedience must go.

I was easy with them and as careless as I had ever been; and the fact that I had not harmed them put out of my mind the truth that

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I had tried to do so. Not by a look, an intonation, did they show a memory of that years'-old episode; and what they could forget I could forget as quickly; or could replace by the recollection that in a distant time they had set me adrift in a world of torment.

This did not express itself even in my mind. It lay there like a bulk of unthought thought; which, as it was expressed in its entirety and not in its parts, had to be understood by the nerves where the intelligence lacked width and grasp; and there was I again in the trough of the sea and twisting to every wind.

To be continued

ON AESTHETICS

By ALAIN

Translated from the French by Joseph T. Shipley

THE POPE

I see that men are misjudging the late Pope. The least they say is that he could not dominate with his regard nor judge from heaven's height the great events that marked his reign. On attempting to consider this broad subject, I was at once halted before the Doctrine, coherent, austere, that I can readily describe from without, but into which I may not enter. One must have told one's beads a thousand times, must thousands and thousands of times have read one's breviary, pronouncing every word, if one wants to think in the manner of a Catholic priest. That the temper of a humanist is gained not merely by reading and understanding, but still more by rereading the humanities, is clear enough. But who knows how to reread?

I took up, therefore, "The Hostage" of Paul Claudel, which is one of my breviaries; and in doing so had one more opportunity of finding out what it means to reread. For I can recite passages of the book, but, lacking that solid object which is the work itself, I am borne from one idea to another; I explain, I reflect, I do not meditate. It is quite otherwise if I constrain myself to read the text itself; I am held then, I am carried along; I think as it wishes, not as I wish. Developments, co-ordinations: it takes charge of them. And the power of beauty, which keeps me from shortening, from transposing, from re-arranging, to suit myself, sets me as it were in the presence of a natural object, which I must accept as it is. That monumental aspect enables me to recognize the great books; and at the same time, reading word by word a great book I have already scanned a score of times, gives me some conception of the nature of Doctrine.

Then read this breviary, skipping no word of it. You will find a pope within it, and, as far as I can judge, the thoughts of a pope. The pope, too, in Napoleonic times, was an arbiter every party wished to hold, to have with it, in prison or otherwise, just as it had

armies, ammunitions, right. But Pope Pius, venerated or not, prisoner or not, did not wish to choose. Held to the doctrine, reciting the doctrine, he judged with invincible care the diabolical agitation, proud, important, rendering even good evil, rendering even justice unjust. To the arguments of sleepless nights—always apparently sound—he replied as a convent head: "One must tell one's beads when slumber cometh not, nor add nighttime to the day, unto which its own evil sufficeth."

The doctrine is self-developing; humanity is self-developing. We may and we ought add much to them; but that is an acquired wisdom. I have often, during the war, quoted the old axiom: "No one is judge in his own cause." Those who reread the lay letters of the pope will find little that responds to their desires and hopes, but they will find a clear warning against belly-minds, against bile-thoughts and spleen-thoughts, which are always persuasive, even when they preach folly, but which are always false, even when they speak with the lips of truth. The stoics of the field, many of whom the church has called, have said of old that a fool who cries in broad daylight that it is day, is no whit less a fool. The spirit should not bend to meaner agitations, nor fling down cries that imitate men's thoughts; still less should it seek the just blow. No blow is just.

MNEMOSYNE

When the ancients said that Mnemosyne was the mother of the Muses, perhaps they did not think beyond that simple relationship which subordinates all the efforts of the mind to lowly memory. Yet that idea, simple as it may seem, will, if we take the time to consider it, shed light on the basic conditions of knowledge. Certainly memory is too often misprized. And there is no doubt that beautiful figures alone will induce us to reflect upon what we assume is well enough known. But beneath this text, as on old parchments, I discern another. For the epic songs, source of all the arts of speech, are in themselves Memory; every tale ages as does a man, soon relinquishing the firm lines of youth, if it have not first a rhythmic, beautiful form. We had to forget the Trojan War or to sing it. Poetry was the effort of memory, and memory's triumph. And to our own day all poetry tells of things that have passed. This is the second text. But the ancient figure enables us still more readily to understand; for all the arts remember. There is no architect that can say: "I

am going to forget whatever men have builded." What he should invent would be ugly indeed, or, to be accurate, if he held strictly to his word he would invent nothing at all. That's why the church recalls the temple, the adornment recalls the trophy, the coach the sedan-chair. Who imitates nothing, invents nothing. It seems that memory is in itself esthetic, and that an object is beautiful chiefly because it recalls another object. Furthermore, every festivity springs from memory; every dance as well; and the universal cult is the cult of the past. The contemplation of the human spectacle is surely thought itself; all things else bore—yet bring no thought of boredom, for action carries us at once away.

There is no new idea. This is an oft-used theme, itself as old as Thus attention comes: if one awake not in this fashion, one shall humankind. "Everything has been said and we have come too late"; but La Bruyère did not dwell in that moment of irony; he gave himself over to the pleasure of thought. The idea that everything has been said is not depressing, but on the contrary is a stimulant. The paradox of man is that everything has been said and nothing understood. We have spoken the last word on war, on the passions. Our true humanity consists of these beautiful, meaningful forms that culture has preserved. But we must strike on them as on bells, for the form always closes upon the meaning, speaking only as beauty. Thus attention comes: if one awake not in this fashion, one shall never be roused. But a symbol sends us back to another symbol. And our first teachers are words, which are monuments.

Unhuman things have naught to say; whence the great scandal that the sciences teach us nothing. So it is not with them that one must start; but fortunately every child begins by repeating things he cannot understand and wants to know; it is in just this way that man, the thinking man, can behold himself in the mirror. In a fable, well concealed, but quite human too; or only if he discover his own musings within Music. Proceeding thus from the form to the matter, he reflected without ever going astray, held by the invincible form he would not change. If every trace of man were wiped from the earth, all men would be lost in labor, through lack of figures; and the first dances and comedies would run amok, being reft of memories, so long as no feet had hollowed a venerable path, the first sketch of the temple. But as soon as the dancer submitted to the human symbol, this would be a new reading, memory again, and once more the humanities would start to flourish.

THE BEATING OF THE REED

BY MANUEL KOMROFF

A straw can break a camel's back but you have no idea of the amount of trouble that a bit of reed may cause. Let me explain. In an orchestra every instrument has its own character and every musician must give way, to a certain extent, to his instrument. Many people think that the man controls his instrument, but more often than not, it is the instrument that does most of the ruling. On the whole, we musicians are a tame lot and most of our instruments are, in a way, kind. Perhaps 'kind' is not the right word, — you might call it meek or bland, — but that makes no difference because you know what I mean. As a rule musicians are tame and their music harmless, but every now and then there is something that breaks loose. You never break a heavy G string, it is always the thin E that snaps. And that is the way it is in life. A time comes when something is bound to break loose and when it does it is like the piercing shriek of a high-strung nervous woman . . . something out of harmony with everything. But modern music requires it and it takes all things to make a good orchestra.

Yet I really have no complaint with myself. The 'cello is a peaceful instrument and I have had fairly steady work with the symphony for over twenty years. But I guess it is all a matter of luck and I never looked for any trouble. I do my work and teach my pupils and when evening comes around I go and get a good glass of beer and that ends my day. But some are different. It takes all kinds of people to make a world and all kinds of characters to fill an orchestra.

The bass fiddle is a steady instrument, always on time and never looking for trouble. If you lend money to a bass fiddler he will always pay . . . sometimes a little delayed, but that is only because he is big and slow. But a clarinet is different. He will pay also, but he likes to drink and talk and have a good time. It's a tricky instrument but at the same time clever. Always to the point, in a quiet way, and not at all like his younger brother the oboe. Be careful of the oboe. Never trust an oboe for you can never tell what he will do.

Meisterberg my teacher used to say: "Never fool with the oboe player because you can't fool with a fool." Sometimes when he was conducting he would rap on the stand and say: "Once more from the cadenza" and under his breath he would murmur so that only those near him could hear—"The oboe is as stupid as a tenor."

Never trust an oboe. Sometimes he plays and sometimes he don't play. It seems to depend on his humor and at the same time the whole orchestra must keep time to him. You can't tune an oboe . . . it just plays as he is. And after everybody is all tuned up to him, he is just as likely as not to quit playing. You can never trust an oboe.

Twenty years I've played with different orchestras and never yet did I know the oboe player not to be a clown. If he don't put his feet out to trip you he will drop rosin into your instrument or loosen your bow. There was Peter Schmidt, for instance, who played with the Harmony Group; he was sixty-five years old and never once did he miss a chance to stick his foot out into the aisle. It didn't matter who it was. It was always a joke to him and its humor never wore off. If you broke your neck — he'd laugh!

But that is not the story I wanted to tell. What I wanted to tell was about this fellow Fred. You can never trust an oboe player. Like Meisterberg used to say, 'You can't fool with a fool.'

Fred never joked very much but he was a clown just the same. The way he wore his little hat was enough. You could see at a glance he was an oboe player even if he hid the instrument under his coat. And sometimes he did this too. He would take the instrument apart, just before we had to go up on the stage, so that he could walk on empty handed like the conductor. Then he would take the different sections out of his pockets and put them together, and look around and grin. This he thought was a great joke. But I always smiled, when no one else did, for he confided in me. A man must tell his troubles to someone. I never laughed at him as the others did because I know what an oboe is like and what it can do.

These young fellows that study for a few years and show off with a little smattering of modern music, . . . and carry Scriabin scores in their pockets, what do they know about music? But when you are trained in Europe, and you have had such teachers as Meisterberg then you know enough to respect everything. And you know that it takes all kinds of characters to make an orchestra

and you know that the oboe is like the piercing cry of a nervous woman.

In a way the oboe player is not to be blamed for acting queerly. He often can't help it. I once heard a fellow expound a theory about the oboe. He claimed that the rapid vibration of the little reed in the player's mouth loosened the nerves and even disarranged the brain. It is like the last straw that breaks a camel's back. Only its process is slower. Anyway it was a theory that seemed to fit in well with the character of the instrument and with most of the players. If you think of the oboe and its wild penetrating nasal note you will understand what I mean.

This fellow Fred, who I started to tell you about, was with us for six years when suddenly, without any warning, his playing became shrill and wild. It would go right through you like a cold knife. The conductor would rap for *piano* and for *pianissimo*, but he would never hear. In the dressing room we would argue with him but all he ever replied was: "The reed — the reed! It beats — it beats!", and he would hold his head.

This lasted for about two months when suddenly one morning he burst into the room just as I was in the middle of giving a pupil a lesson, and shouted: "I killed her! I killed her! The reed it beats—it beats. I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to do it. What shall I do, I think I killed her!" He threw himself on his knees and crushed his hat down tight upon his head. "It beats — it beats . . . I had to do it."

Picture such a scene to yourself. He was kneeling on the floor and held his arms around his head. The pupil dropped his bow and just vanished. What was I to do? He was in a terrible state and I could do nothing with him. "You think you killed your wife?" I asked. "Was it an accident and why did you have to do it?" I tried to calm him. I tried to pull him into a chair. I shook him. "Why?" I repeated but all I could get out of him were the words: "It beats! It beats!"

I was certain he was worked up over nothing but you dare not trust an oboe player. I got down on the floor and pleaded with him to pull himself together and be a man. But when he saw me on my knees he began to weep like a five year old girl and between gasps cried: "What am I to do? Send for a doctor or something. I had to do it but I didn't mean to do it. The oboe did it! It beats! It hammers in my head. It makes me cry out when I want to be

quiet. It makes me sad when everyone is happy. It makes me run into the street without a hat and suddenly it commands me to be still and holds me bound to the ground like a rock. It beats . . . And I am the slave. Nobody knows what is inside of me but the oboe knows everything. My innermost thoughts it knows and it beats them out when I don't want them known. A cruel master that beats a slave. His slave! Ha! Ha! Yes, I am laughing! But you won't laugh when I tell you the discovery I made. I might have known it years ago but I never suspected . . . who could have told me? I must learn everything for myself and the other day I discovered that it was a woman! Yes . . . the oboe was a woman. A hissing, snaky, jealous woman. Jealous of everything! Jealous of my darling. Jealous of life itself. I might have guessed it before. I might have known it. But now it's too late. Too late. She made me kill her. What am I to do? It beats! It beats!"

In this manner he rambled on and on. Tears dropped from his face. But I had no time to lose. I quickly put on my hat and coat and was about to run over to his house when suddenly I stopped and said to myself, 'No one will understand him. He will get into mischief. He must not be left alone. Musicians are different, we settle things in our own way.' I dragged him to the side of the room and locked him into the clothes closet. As I turned the key in the lock I could hear his muffled cries. "She was jealous. It beats! She made me do it!"

I rushed through the streets. A confusion of thoughts ran through my mind. I was certain that it was some foolish accident that had completely unnerved him. Yet I feared that she might be in need, though if you knew her it would be hard to imagine it. I must tell you now that if he was queer then she was just as queer only an octave higher. Fred was skinny as a lead pencil but she was a toothpick. A toothpick sharp at both ends. How they lived I can't understand. You never saw them eat and they seemed never to sleep. First of all they were vegetarians, — but they never ate vegetables . . . only nuts and fruit. And even at that they didn't eat much fruit but always nibbled on the peels. It's a theory they had. Where he found her I can't say but it would be difficult to find another. Then she played violin and for a time quite well; but how she could endure his practicing on the oboe I could never understand.

After a woman is married a year or two you would naturally

expect her to broaden out, but with her it was the reverse. She grew thinner every day. Each time I saw her I was certain that she would not live till the next day . . . With her everything seemed reversed. When she made a dress she turned the goods wrong side out, her pictures she hung upside down, photographs she cut into triangles, her clothes she would fold up and her shoes she would hang in the closet. After a year or so she stopped playing her violin. I do not know whether it was because of his oboe or because you had to play the notes from left to right and this to her seemed wrong. With her everything seemed wrong!

I forgot to tell you they never drank tea or coffee . . . they had an idea it was poison. And they didn't believe in belts, or garters or anything that went around because they said it stopped the circulation. He was thin and as bony as a lead pencil and she was like a toothpick. In the whole wide world I doubt if you could find a queerer couple.

Then you couldn't talk to them because they had such funny ideas about . . . about everything. The world to her was a system. Everything she blamed on what she called 'the system.' Now, I know that for fifty-cent pupils you have one system and for dollar pupils you have another system. But she was a socialist and to her the whole world was one system. He did not bother so much about this but if you ever spoke to him about music . . . Often he explained to us for hours why the orchestra is arranged wrong and how it should be made right by putting the kettle drums in the middle and the fiddles all around the back. It's almost as bad as the joke about the army captain who wanted the band fixed so that the little men played the small instruments and the large men played the big . . . Yes, he wanted the drums in the middle and he explained it in a reasonable way. While he was talking it sounded all right and often I thought he was a great man — a genius. But when I went home and thought it over then I felt he was just a plain damn fool.

Well, that's the way they lived. Either he was a genius or a damn fool and whatever he was, she was the same only an octave higher. All skin and bones . . . They were married four years when he began playing with that shrill cry. And the penetrating nasal twang from his oboe would cut right through you. The conductor would rap and shout but it did no good. His one oboe was enough wood-wind for fourteen orchestras. And he would cry — "The

reed — the reed. It beats — it beats.” — And he would hold his head. A straw can break a camel’s back and it seems he couldn’t stand it a minute longer. All this came back to me as I rushed through the streets. At last I reached the house.

Up the steps I leaped — two at a time. The door was closed. I put my hand on the knob and was just about to open when my attention was arrested by the playing of a violin. Such playing! ‘Who can it be?’ I asked myself. ‘Where can it be? Impossible!’ Yes, it was true. I threw open the door and there she was sitting between the rounds of a chair, that was turned upside down, playing her instrument. Her bony elbow was tied with a handkerchief, but it did not prevent her fiddling the most difficult passages. She appeared not to see me. Words failed me. What could I say? I tried to say something, but when I did she marked time with her foot and beat her loose sandal upon the floor. She did not hear and she did not want to hear. I had nothing to say. As I came in haste I left the same way.

Now I had good reason to run. My feet could not travel fast enough. The key was in my hand. I held it so tight it left a mark in my palm. I made straight for the closet but I fumbled with the key in the lock and as I was trying to open the door, I heard strange sounds like the cracking of nuts. A scraping, grinding, snapping sound. ‘Good God’ — I thought, — ‘he has gone mad.’ But when I opened the door there he sat on a suit case and under his feet were the fragments of his oboe. He was crushing it to bits.

The excitement that followed is hard to relate. It was one long yell of confusion. He ran through the streets and I after him. People must have thought me chasing a thief. When I arrived she was already in his arms . . . Married people understand things that no one else can. And musicians don’t have to talk very much.

But what was it? It was difficult to make head or tail of it. He had one story and she had quite another. I had to piece the fragments together and from what I could gather it all was about his hair, which she objected to, because it would hang down over his eyes when he practiced on the oboe. It seemed wrong to her and that morning she took the shears while he was playing and began to clip his locks. Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? He continued his playing until suddenly he realized what was happening. Then he snatched the shears and flung them at her. Her arm was cut. She reeled and fell to the floor. I think

she was more surprised than hurt. At any rate he was confused, frightened and imagined the worst. Not knowing what to do he ran to me. No wonder the pupil disappeared when he burst into the room.

In the end it all turned out pretty well. She has gone back to the violin and gives concerts while he has charge of the battery in our symphony. Often when I look up to his corner he will point his drum stick to the feet of the conductor. That is just to tell me that the arrangement is bad and that his drums should be in the center. He explains his plans to everybody and someday, just to convince him that he is wrong, we may try it.

Now that is about all there is — excepting the pupil. The pupil came back the following week and said that he was unable to practice because he had left his bow. Well, I was going to give him a lesson of a different kind. I was about to tell him, that when people are married four or five years a certain beating creeps in which, with reverses and low ebbs of fortune, can be magnified to a horrible and wild tom-tom making them both slaves to the monotony of the repetition. Making them both do things that they would be sorry for. Yes, I was going to give him this kind of lesson but I felt that he wouldn't understand and besides I hadn't much time. You know, you have to have one system for dollar pupils and another for fifty-cent pupils.



DESIGN

CLAUDE BRAGDON



DESIGN

CLAUDE BRAGDON

SALOME TO THE DEAD JOHN

BY GLADYS OAKS

"What visions were there in that stony hole
That all your spirit's lust should be enticed,
And all the passions of your aching blood
Should waste upon the empty bones of Christ?

"Did you not know the white flames of my breasts
Held statelier visions, and your body's sword
Could pierce me deeper with life's holiness
Than all the spurious fire of the lord?

"They feared you as your words like smoke came up
From out the mouth of rock that was your hole;
Eaten with vermin, lean with sleeplessness
You preached to them of your immortal soul.

"We two upon a couch of sky-swept earth,
Your thin, brown body for my covering,
Were prayers of flesh so bright with sacredness
We could have known no dread nor evil thing.

"But you would not. With starving you were filled
Too full, and hatred, so you must deny
The gift of love . . . For this I had you killed! . . .
And now I burn no longer and can die."

SONNET

BY MAXWELL BODENHEIM

You write: "I have not patronized the strong
And rashly mean exchange of markets weighed
With calico and muslin tricks arrayed
To circumvent the jibes of right and wrong.
I walk on highways where the poisoned dregs
And miseries of ethics lose their shape
And merge into a long, translucent cape
That welcomes and reveals my naked legs!"

Your letter trembles in my hand, as though
The breathing of your wild soul had congealed
To sheets of paper whipped by mocking black,
And underneath the stare of flesh I know
That all your quests and draperies have reeled
To skies beyond the reach of knife and rack.

ARISTOCRAT

BY CHALLIS SILVAY

Words
Born of the precise marriage
Of your lips
Are brocaded ladies
Of the court
Forever piqued
By the crack-brained jester
Of my common wit...

THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE NEW YORK THEATRE

New York May 1925.

One cannot write of the theatre today without a first glance at the snake of censorship, which, with inevitable discernment, darted its fangs at the two most significant American dramas of the season. It is in native plays, indeed, that this year rises to importance theatrically; despite the usual flood of material from abroad, the vital stuff is almost wholly American in author and theme. Outstanding in their productions are the Provincetown Players; after their initial experiments with Edmund Wilson's "The Crime in The Whistler Room" and Stark Young's "The Saint," Eugene O'Neill struck home with a series of revivals and one new tragedy. The plays presented, aside from the one-act pieces grouped as "S. S. Glencairn," are the most completely unified and intense that O'Neill has written. Much of his work gives the impression that pen was set to paper before the mind had completed its task of organization: in "Anna Christie" the struggle shifts from the influence of the sea on father and daughter to a parent-and-lover triangle, while the happy ending so vehemently disclaimed is no more foreboding than in thousands of comedies that "end with the marriage, because that's where the tragedy begins;" in "All God's Chillun Got Wings" the symbolic and the realistic move side by side instead of in harmonious blending, and the theme is confused, in that it is not a simple question of mixed marriage, of two lovers that happen to be of different colors, but it portrays two burdens of inferiority carried wherever the characters go — even to France, where there is no color-line — and urging the persons of the play to their grievous ends. But in the three plays of this season O'Neill to the very end sees clearly and straight. "Emperor Jones," in its drummed doom of atavism, needs no discussion. "Diff'rent" and "Desire Under the Elms" bring the dramatist to New England, where he most intimately belongs; both plays, of soil or sea, plough deep into the heart and root up thwarted hopes and dulled desires. In the incidents of his tragedies O'Neill is as melodramatic as Shakspeare — nor can tragedy

often escape, lighting as it does souls borne beyond human endurance. Yet both love-starved women, and the men who see the goals of their lives snatched out of reach, are consistently and poignantly presented, in tragedy that coils at the core of our civilization. Incidentally, the new O'Neill play advances a novel scenic device: instead of utilizing the curtain as the "fourth wall" of the room on the stage, it places the entire house behind the footlights, lifting walls from room after room as the action requires.

In close competition with the Provincetown comes the Theatre Guild, with two noteworthy American dramas. The first of these, "Processional," by John Howard Lawson, is a jazz play of American life, that whirls in its movement from farce to melodrama, never constant to a mood, but inconsistent and haphazard and hurried as life itself — yet finding a higher unity in its continuous play of irony and pity upon our social system. "Processional" was a sudden blow to many complacent theatre-goers, not only because of its virulent attack upon Babbitt smugness and Main Street sentimentality — as in the reverent pause when the militia find the snapshot of the mother of the man they have been mauling — but because it demanded that they look upon the drama as non-representational art: those who grew concerned in the fate of Sadie Cohen were shocked to discover that the author cared no whit for her fortunes, save as one element of the panorama he was trying to unfold. For these reasons "They Knew What They Wanted," a less searching piece by Sidney Howard, proved more generally pleasing. This study rises above the typical small-town play, of the "Mr. Pitt," "The Easy Mark" and "The Potters" variety, in its portrayal of the waitress who wanted a home of her own, and especially in Pauline Lord's acting of that hopeful and hard-handled woman.

Outside the producing groups we are carried at once to "What Price Glory?" Maxwell Anderson and Lawrence Stallings have here reproduced the atmosphere of the subcellars of war, the trench-stench swept full in the nostrils of the public. During intermissions, one almost sees the smoke and smells the burnt powder of fields recalled in tumbling memories; the war is on again, grim, unnecessary, real. For this the audience overlooks the trivial plot... realism has a sentimentality of its own which "What Price Glory?" pours to the last drop of bitter-sweet.

Home from the war, these privates are the chauffeurs and prize-

fight touts James Gleason shows in "The Fall Guy" and "Is Zat Sol" Frankly pictures of the kitchen-drawingroom world, where napkins at the chin are etiquette's pride, these comedies capture the ways and the words of the humbler citizens with irrepressible humor—and with always the ennobling contrast with politer circles: in the one play the "gentleman" visits the lower folk; in the other, two poor guys get stranded in a Fifth Avenue mansion. The satisfying conclusions remind us that wealth and lineage have no monopoly on sterling hearts, and supply the basis of popular success to these genuine studies of one phase of America.

The best dramas from abroad are older pieces. The Neighborhood Playhouse has afforded two novelties, one a beautiful Indian drama centuries old, the other a most modern, subtle self-analysis no one had been bold enough to stage since its publication twelve years ago. "The Little Clay Cart," delicately and picturesquely presented, with soothing Hindu music, showed that the quaint patina of time may more pleasantly than modern complexity of intrigue deck out the eternal triangle. "Exiles," by James Joyce, achieves all its emotional force by way of intellectual stimulation, and is therefore a severe strain on the attention. Yet in its implications the theme, without being melodramatic, is one of the most tragic ever conceived: the husband, who believes in complete freedom, sees his loyal wife moved by the lures of a friend, sees her anguished desire for his command that she be faithful — yet he will not interfere. The conflict thus gathers into one mould all the formerly associated elements of tragedy: the disaster rises, not out of the weakness or evil, but out of the goodness and strength of the protagonist; the tragedy is foreseen, not only by the audience, but by the victim, foreseen and avoidable; yet it is inevitably rooted in his nature, is indeed the torturing doubt that will forever afflict him; for the end is no act of finality — a shot, a slammed door, a crying for the sun — but an outward continuance of the usual, and an inward rending asunder of a soul, intellectually determined to be free and to allow freedom, emotionally demolished by the deeds its will dictates.

Maurice Schwartz, at the Yiddish Art Theatre, added to the claims of the foreign drama with "Wolves," the first of Romain Rolland's plays to be produced in America. The French Revolution is chosen to present and to symbolize the manner in which man reverts to the beast, once the passions are unloosed by war. Less

satisfying was Schwartz's other significant venture, "Peter the Great," dramatized by Merejkowsky from his famous novel-trilogy. This play portrays the weakling son of the Czar, and demonstrates by contrary the fact that drama must be builded on strength of opposing wills. Only when, as in "Hamlet," the weakling is less contender than the battleground of mightier disputants, will the drama find place for his tortured indecision.

The Provincetown Players are again to the fore, with a good bit of character work in Vildrac's "Michel Auclair;" with a study in morbidity, Hasenclever's "Beyond," beautifully staged by Robert Edmund Jones, and with their jolly and high-spirited revival of "Patience," the success of which is bringing the long awaited Gilbert and Sullivan series. Revivals, indeed, are the best of the work from abroad. The Actors' Theatre has produced Shaw's "Candida," with Katherine Cornell (and Clare Eames gloriously tipsy) in the costumes of the 'Nineties; and Ibsen's "The Wild Duck" with little Helen Chandler more modest and more successful than was Nazimova. "L'Enfant Prodigue," the old French pantomime, was not so happily done, despite Laurette Taylor's best endeavors. Pantomime is something for which we must still turn to Europe.

Europe was here personally, light in the "Blue Bird" and the returning "Chauve Souris," Russian vaudeville both; more sober in the gestures of Mme Simone (whose performance of Pirandello's "Naked" was a two-hour tear-flood), and in the suggestive art of Gemier. Gemier is a master of facial control; his ordinarily impassive countenance, like the profile of a medallion, lends itself to the greatest variety of emotional expression. Most stimulating of his productions were the two Shakesperian dramas; the French do not suffer from Shakesperolatry, but handle the bard as a contemporary dramatist. "The Taming of the Shrew" thus becomes a rollicking farce; played with the usually omitted prologue, it allows Sly, watching from a box, to inject such up-to-the moment comedy as calling the horse "Spark Plug!" "The Merchant of Venice" was humanized: Aragon and Morocco choose their caskets at the same time, with contrasted jealous fire and withholding pride; Shylock after Jessica's elopement is teased by a merry mob, whose cruel antics justify his hatred; many of the other changes were equally novel and stimulating.

Of the many other dramas, from home and abroad, few linger in the mind, unless by virtue of excellent acting. The Theatre

Guild, for example, produced with superb finesse two sparkling comedies of no great depth: the more profound, Molnar's "The Guardsman," linked Lynn Fontanne, Alfred Lunt, Helen Westley and Dudley Digges, in a perfect portrayal of a jealous husband disguising himself as a lover to test his wife — and unable at the end to tell whether she had seen through his disguise; the lighter, A. A. Milne's "Ariadne," is maintained wholly by Laura Hope Crews, in the old story (amusingly melodramatic in Vadja's "Grounds for Divorce") of a wife whose husband's mind is buried in business. Grace George trifles pleasantly with Gerald's "She Had to Know," another drama of a marriage blurred; this wife, while faithful to her husband, still had to know whether she was attractive to other men. Edwin Mayer's "The Firebrand" is somewhat more than a bed-room farce in costume, by virtue of the irony of the author and the general skill of the male members of the cast. Walter Hampden in "Othello" was straightforward and sincere; George Arliss in Galsworthy's "Old English" a splendid and futile mid-Victorian relic.

A few moments call for passing comment. Barrie's "Shall We Join the Ladies" is the first dramatic venture of the unfinished mystery type, like Stockton's famous story "The Lady or the Tiger?" "Dawn," early in the season, in contrast with "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," that Ethel Barrymore briefly held, suggests the growth in conventional liberality since Pinero first wrote: the woman with a past, who therefore cannot be happy, vs. the girl with a future, who may have both her adolescent slip and her husband. Philip Barry's "The Youngest" glimpses truth in its picture of the scorned "baby of the family" who finally rebels and wins respectful treatment and the usual heroine. "The Complex" put Freud on the stage, not in the revelation of characters, but in actual clinical treatment of a sufferer — though Freud would probably disown the physician who acts. And "Shipwrecked," — though it deservedly received the fate it names — gave a moment's pleasure by recalling the "Great San Francisco Fire" as the Coney Islands of our childhood showed the flames.

With scores of plays here unmentioned, appealing to every mood and taste, with failure crowding out failure in the rush for success, with insincere pandering to lasciviousness or sentimentality in crowded houses next door to crowds intent on serious, honest plays, the American theatre gives evidence of wholesome development, in its incessant variety and its throbbing life.

JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

TEXAS LETTER

Dallas, April 1925.

The history of Texas is an epitome, almost a burlesque, of the history of America. Here, for instance, is a city of two hundred thousand persons — skyscrapers, white-ways, peacock alleys, millionaires, boards for the censorship of movies, stenographers, bootleggers, five-and-ten-cent stores, Palmolive soap, Chesterfield cigarettes — where eighty-five years ago the Indians, hardly knowing that white men existed, hunted wild-cats and buffaloes, and where a little more than fifty years ago the pioneers still lived in log-cabins on the banks of the Trinity River. It is American mushroom growth carried almost to absurdity.

What traditions could one expect in such a place? There are only two figures — the Indian and the cowboy — to dominate the scene, to give any sort of a background; and they are both gone now — either buried in shallow graves on the lone prairie, or surviving as lonely, as anachronistic symbols, old and subdued looking in their badly fitting "store clothes," gathering together occasionally for pathetic meetings of the old-time trail-drivers' or cattlemen's association.

In regard to a literary tradition, we are even poorer. We have the love-lyrics (a la Tom Moore) of Mirabeau Lamar, president of the Republic of Texas in 1838, and more lately the Byronic banalities and Burnsian sentimentalities of one Jeff McLemore, recently congressman from Texas. No more, no less.

Is it strange then that cultural development here has proceeded along ways somewhat difficult of understanding by Easterners? For example, appreciation of music has been developed by the orchestras in the picture-shows. As one recent visitor exclaimed in amazement, "They give programs of operatic music, and the people like it." And whatever interest in literature now exists has been fostered in those "centers of Christian enlightenment" scoffed at by Eastern sophisticates. It is a queer world, and not least of the queer places is "the Bible belt" where anti-revolutionists are produced with the same spontaneousness as young pagan worshippers of Cabell, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, Sherwood Anderson, and even the pulpit-pounding antichrist, H. L. Mencken.

In prose, Texas has as yet produced nothing indigenous or worthy of remembrance. Clever journalists like Chester Crowell and self-advertising experts like Ruth Cross have recently appeared in our midst, but they have left for New York as soon as possible and have returned only on rare occasions. Dorothy Scarborough, professor in Columbia University, is a Texan product, and her novel, *In the Land of Cotton*, is creditable but uninspired. After all, Ruth Cross's *The Golden Cocoon*, in spite of its melodrama and cheapness, is the best Texan novel so far. More promising for the future, however, is J. Frank Dobie's collection of *Legends of Texas*, which have greatly increased the interest of young writers in Texan history and tradition.

So far as the drama is concerned, Texas has made an even smaller beginning than in the field of the novel or non-fiction. Fifteen years ago we had the crude, but vigorous phenomenon of the traveling "tent-show" whose actors elevated the Texan soul with tear-provoking versions of "Saint Elmo" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," but even that sturdy drama succumbed to the greater sensationalism of the movies and the greater crudity of the vaudeville stage. Naturally then there has been no writing of plays because there have been no theaters to produce them; and it is only within the past three or four years that a new interest has been aroused by the amateur movement and the organization of groups like the Dallas Little Theater and the Green Mask Players of Houston. Prizes have been offered for plays dealing with Southwestern material, and occasionally dramas by local authors have been presented. Recently the Dallas Little Theater produced three one-act plays by Dallas writers, but it would be too much to expect that these possessed great literary merit. They didn't. So far Texas' dramatic literature has put forth two preliminary flowers, the rather charming fantasies of Howard Mumford Jones, professor in the University of Texas, and John William Rogers' "Judge Lynch," which won the David Belasco prize last year.

In the field of poetry alone, Texas seems to have not only a future but a present, for her mature poets — such as Hilton Ross Greer, Karle Wilson Baker, Grace Noll Crowell, John P. Sjolander and Whitney Montgomery — are now producing small, delicately modeled lyrics that are close and true to the Texan soil; but even here we look to the future for a larger achievement. It seems to me that all hopes for the beginning of the great Texan literature

to be are based on the group of young writers — mostly poets — now issuing from the several liberal colleges of the state. They are talented and enthusiastic — surprisingly free from Texan or Southern prejudices, and from theological scruples — and yet very much determined to convert the Southwestern background into literature. They are closely in touch with the modern movements, but not too tightly bound by current literary conventions; and there is something of rebel in the blood of each. It is perhaps paradoxical to say that they have detachment, a sense of irony, even a wholesome self-contempt. As yet they are all immature, and it is, of course, impossible to say which will make their mark in the world; but certainly one may prophesy with some assurance that a few will eventually be heard from. I should list as the most promising these: Ottys Sanders, Stanley E. Babb, Isaac W. Wade, William Russell Clark, Lexie Dean Robertson, Jake Zeitlin, Ruth West, Aubrey Burns, Jeanne Calfee, Ottie Gill, Grace Moncure, Ruth Moncrief, Ruth Garrison Francis, Clyde Jackson, and, of the slightly more mature writers, John William Rogers, Jr.

The trend of literary development in Texas today is being fostered by the *Southwest Review*, Texas' first representative literary magazine; by *The Buccaneer*, a monthly poetry journal; and by the book-review pages of the *Dallas News*, the *Galveston News*, the *El Paso Times*, the *Dallas Times-Herald*, and other papers. All of these have sprung up in the last two years and give plain evidence that the literary birth of Texas has occurred. Other signs of the times are the Poetry Society of Texas, a stolid organization of three years' standing that has meant much to Texas because of the wisdom of its president, Hilton R. Greer; the prizes for poems offered by Southern Methodist University; the unexplainable public interest in art. There is even an increasing concern with painting as is shown by the current exhibitions of the work of Texan painters, and the crowds attending them. Certainly our best painters—Frank Reaugh, E. G. Eisenlohr, Jerome Hill, Olin Travis — are doing very creditable work with distinctively Southwestern scenes, and deserve some attention.

The miracle has happened within the three short years just past, and Texas' notorious dearth of interest in things literary and artistic has been supplanted by a great ferment, evident in every corner of the state. The New Day seems to be here; we are now waiting for something to come of it.

GEORGE BOND

BOSTON LETTER

Boston, April 1925.

Boston is a curious and perplexing city, a strange and sometimes glamorous stirring of old and of new enthusiasms; of ancient custom and riddling dogma that innures and enfuriates; of a stultifying traditionalism that spreads from the shores of the Charles River, at the foot of Beacon Hill, to the elms and scholarly beauty of Cambridge. And there is a slowly growing cosmopolitanism that had its first start in the recesses of Beacon Hill with the younger group of intellectuals and dilettantes, some of them, who have created periodically and let die, various attempts in the theatre.

There is still the Stage Society, however, which functions only for members, privately, its casts unnamed but recognizable, presenting each month in the old barn on Joy Street, plays that interest them. Last month it was a Russian play written by a lesser known and philosophical contemporary of Chekov, played for the first time in English, translated by one of their members, and staged with unusual effectiveness despite the smallness of the stage and the difficulties in obtaining equipment.

At various of their Sunday afternoon teas, they give shorter pieces; last week it was Laurence Housman's "Echo de Paris." In another week they will play Anatole France's own dramatic version of his "Cranquebille;" later in the season they will give Jean Cocteau's "Marriage in the Eiffel Tower," to which the ill-fated Swedish ballet have danced.

For a time last year there was a brave and dissenting group led by Edward Massev, who, calling themselves the Stage Guild ventured to play Harry Wagstaff Gribble's "March Hares," for which they brought Alexander Onslow of the original cast to play with them. They played Henning Berger's "The Deluge," Lenomand's "The Failures," and Philip Moeller's "Sophie" with which they irritated the censors here and started a mad and foolish discussion. And then, perhaps for lack of public interest, and perhaps because of internal dissension, they dispersed. There is still a small and impecunious group as yet of no significance, calling itself the Theatre Guild, that stems from them.

Cambridge and Harvard, robbed of Professor Baker and the

stimulus of his 47 Workshop, have formed a Theatregoers Club this week, to develop actors and critics of the drama, aided and abetted by Wallace Eddinger, who will establish a yearly scholarship for promising actors, and by the company at the Copley theatre, who under the leadership of E. E. Clive, its leading actor have infused new life into the repertory there.

Some years ago Henry Jewett, an English actor, first came to Boston in Shakespearian repertoire; he never returned to England, but remained here, at the Copley, giving plays that included Ibsen, the Manchesterites, Shaw, Wilde, all of the English dramatists from Sheridan to Barrie. Even "R. U. R." has slipped into his repertoire. Now the Copley has changed hands, and Clive, an actor-manager of ability and intelligence, has made it financially durable, is playing a repertoire that ranges from Martin Flavin's "Children of the Moon" to Glemence Dane's "Bill of Divorcement" and "Androcles and the Lion."

But the soul and substance of cultural life here now, as it has always been, is in music. To the growing enthusiasm for things Russian, and for modern music which Pierre Monteux fostered, Koussevitzky, now conductor of the Boston Symphony orchestra, has given spurs. He has given us all Stravinsky programs; music of Liadov, Moussorgsky, Prokofiev, of the French Honegger, Roussell Florent Schmitt and Lili Boulanger; of the American Aaron Copland, whose symphony for organ and orchestra he will probably repeat despite the clamours of the ultra-conservatives who rush out in a stern, protesting body at the first intimations of cacophony.

And although in the theatre life is resistant, disillusioning, for it is only the musical show of bareness and of risquee buffoonery that remains here for long, there is no dulling or contracting of the musical life — except in the loss of opera. There are no such organizations as the League of International Composers, or incipient groups to foster modern music, yet there are always audiences for the visiting musician. And this year the philanthropically supported People's symphony, of which Emil Mollenhauer has been conductor for six seasons, is extending itself even more, offering its post of conductor to various willing visitants who have included Percy Grainger and Henry Hadley and will include Leginska; and whose soloists have ranged from Geraldine Schnitzer to innumerable promising and unpromising students. Several of the flute players of

the Boston symphony have formed a Flute Players Club, and on occasional Sundays at the Art Club give concerts of ancient and modern music, of Mozart, of Arthur Bliss, and of Honegger.

Various professors and musicians have been giving interpretative and supplementary lectures during the winter on music, with special reference to concerts of the orchestras and of visiting string quartets. There is a fever for musical information. A good sign.

And this year too there has been a new enthusiasm in art, perhaps consequent on the opening to the public of Mrs. Jack Gardner's Italian Palace, now called the Gardner Museum, where one may forget for a time that a museum is the gathering place of beautiful things, dully arranged behind glass cases, and imagine that he is still in the Europe of the Quattrocento, with its mellowing stone facades, its fountains and great bowls of orchids, — its opulent silks and tapestries. For here, nothing is arranged as in a museum — there are Dutch rooms, Italian balconies, a Spanish cloister — everywhere there is an air of luxury, of beauty, and of repose.

A few weeks ago with the opening of the new Robert C. Vose galleries and the spectacular flourish of the Zuloaga exhibit, there was a mad rush of faddists and of society folk, to the galleries. An enthusiasm that has included the Frank Brangwyn oils, water colors and black and whites, as well as the exhibition of the George Bellows, Eugene Speicher and Charles Hopkinson canvases at the Art Club.

There are those who deplore the fastidiousness, the dullness, the inertia of Boston, its coldness to things modern, intellectual and unconventional. Yet there is still a quiet enthusiasm, an unrushing stimulus here, that suggests itself in the miracle plays that the Harvard Dramatic Club stages in the Gothic porches of the Germanic Museum each Christmas; in the musical life although it excludes opera, except for a brief two weeks of the Chicago company each season; in the staunch support that is given to the Copley theatre now that it has resumed its earlier intelligent ways.

For foreign theatres there is an ancient Chinese theatre, of which I shall write in more detail later, an Italian theatre, and a Yiddish theatre which limits itself almost wholly to traditional farces.

EVELYN GERSTEIN

BOOK REVIEWS

IF WE SHALL HAVE MESSIAHS

THE NEW SPOON RIVER. *By Edgar Lee Masters.*
New York: Boni and Liveright. — \$2.50.

A "generation" in letters usually consists in a number of writers whose aims are largely the same. About 1912 or before, there came into prominence in America certain novelists and poets, and two critics of power — Brooks and Mencken — whose vision of this country was directed by the same general sense of social and moral values, by a similar critical intolerance of the so-called puritan tradition, of its incomplete evaluation of the spiritual life and its consequent neglect of the aesthetic motive in literature. So vehement were these writers in the act of liberation — perhaps stung to revolt by a memory of the pioneer, Stephen Crane — that little time or insight was given to the avowed purpose of their attack: aesthetic freedom from academic moralism. Whether any of these men could have achieved a mature art — form out of the immense documentary evidence which Dreiser, for instance, produced is an impossible question; it is simply a fact that none of them did. And because Edgar Lee Masters was the significant poet of the movement, the measure of its success as a spiritual, aesthetically realized tableau of an epoch in America may be found in his books. Mr. Masters, like most of his contemporaries, never mastered the art of writing; and his books, so soon as 1925, claim the critical interest — critical habit aside — only as history, as evidence on one side in the ethical history of the United States. For our moral values, if not radically different, are at least greatly changed in fifteen years. And with this alteration, this more precise realization of a moral direction, Mr. Masters becomes solely a documentary importance. He has never been an artist.

Now Mr. Masters returns, after some years of not very excellent novel-writing, to the subject-matter he was beginning to exploit about fifteen years ago: he returns to Spoon River. At first Mr. Masters was interesting. There was no criterion in America at that

time to point out that his writing was sensational, very much as scandal among neighbors is important in communities where such matters are not accepted but are precariously discussed; he shouted the bloody truth. It was hardly an aesthetic interest that held one when one read about a spinster who confessed she hadn't been a virgin since puberty... Confessions, perhaps, aren't so interesting as they were; nor is the revelations of vice, or of sentimentalized struggle for emancipation, very morally significant to the incurious. Yet Mr. Masters was acclaimed a worthy poet . . . even a great one, mainly by those who introduced him—Reedy and Miss Monroe and Mr. Mencken. Now Mr. Mencken suspects Mr. Masters of occasional dulness. *The New Spoon River* is oppressively dull.

Edgar Lee Masters was astute enough to appropriate for a new matter a well-known old form. But whether because he wasn't sufficiently sensitive to find out all its possibilities or because he didn't care about poetry he failed to make it, and thus his subject-matter, of lasting importance. Nobody had used the form in America before; almost nobody had read the *Characters of Theophrastus*, and the vague journalism which advertised Mr. Master's annual reading of the Greek Anthology now seems rather meaningless, for the journalists hadn't examined the models — it was easier to talk about them for Mr. Masters' benefit. So he went on to greatness, not through poetry but through Freud when Freudians were comparatively rare.

There are certain obvious properties of the epitaphic monologue that may be used mechanically for correspondingly obvious effects. Mr. Masters' effects reduce to one: the irony in the discrepancy between surface appearance and inner actuality. The irony is established dramatically through the delivery of the actuality from the grave and the simultaneous destruction by it of the appearance which was the life of the character. This is a formula for tragedy.

But Masters, never exceeding the formula, produced in his epitaphs merely a series of moral situations, pure when he effaced himself, false when he made the character a mouthpiece for his own expanding messiah-complex. In neither of the *Spoon River* books are there more than two or three "poems" in which the imagination is carried to a realm of overtones, to the essences rationally indeterminate, which are poetry: to the interplay of free sensations in excess of the terms of the moral situation which is the scaffolding of the poem. Yet this aesthetic deficiency was largely compensated

for by ingenuity. Mr. Masters constructed a whole town, with its complete moral interrelations; and in the interrelation of many persons a single person lived and apparently became at the end more than a tragic homily on the frustrations of his own life. Few of the poems were complete of themselves; almost every one depended for its effectiveness on the memory of others; the weaknesses, the bad writing, in an individual poem were covered up by the complex interdependency of characters in the whole. This interdependency created various tangents for speculation beyond the limits of the moral problem furnished by the separate poem; but the tangents were extensions of the moral problem only (never giving a free direction to the imagination) though they seemed to be poetry; upon analysis they disperse and break down. Through the persistent use of this device Mr. Masters has given us for some years a spurious product which satisfies his own generation — as poetry should satisfy men in all times.

And the properties of the New Spoon River are the properties of the old. But Mr. Masters has in this book, as in his first one, fallen into an occasional lyricism, rough but very pure. There are two, only two, notable specimens in this volume, Howard Lemsom and Gordon Halicha. They are notable no less as two exceptions in an astonishing mass of tedium.

Whatever the dissatisfaction one may have felt after reading through the old Spoon River, one is certain to prefer it to the new. The writer more frequently had his eye upon his matter, was more nearly the poet. But now Mr. Masters, along with others of his generation, has become the very person they all thought they detested — the moralist. It was a question of Whose Morals. And now that Mr. Masters' moral preferences are more or less exposed, it is impossible for one to be concerned with his issues. A vague though extremely active contempt for certain permanent vices in human nature — hypocrisy, meanness, malice — is not the entire prerequisite toward informing a system of definite moral values. So his protest is scattered into a morally revolting haze of ontology, objurgation, prophecy, that he probably kept bottled up until he became so convinced of his vision that he had to give it with some ill-humor and much arrogance to the world. Lacking the intelligence to diagnose precisely the social evils, the cultural astigmatism of the people of his Spoon River, he has come to hate them in the consciousness of an obscurely superior self. Those who would be

messiahs should remember, perhaps, that contempt for men and a vulgar admiration for the appurtenances of culture had no place in the ethics of Budha or Christ or Lao-tse. And if we shall have messiahs . . . when the half-gods go, the gods—sometimes—arrive.

ALLEN TATE

MUSIC — AN EVOLUTIONARY ART

MUSIC OF THE PAST. *By Wanda Landowska.*
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924. — \$2.50.

I have read Madame Landowska's "Music of the Past," and must confess that my impressions are somewhat difficult to define. The work gives clear evidence of her musical erudition and archeological knowledge; and is also remarkably readable and entertaining (which, considering the subject, is no mean feat): but on the other hand, it appears to me to suffer from a certain vagueness of aim which left me finally speculating as to just what it is that she is driving at. Perhaps fewer quotations and more of her personal views might have made her purpose clearer, but I finished the book with the sensation of having wandered through a mental circle, arriving again from whence I started. This feeling, I believe, is due to a certain atmosphere of self contradiction which befalls many of her arguments (see chapters on Progress, Tradition, Style and Sonority); but on summing up, one comes to the conclusion that the theory underlying the work is that Music is no less ancient than the sister Arts, and that being an "Art" it is essentially non-progressive, or rather, non-evolutionary. Personally, I feel that this theory is not tenable. As to its antiquity — we would probably find, were it possible to trace continuously the history of Music back through the ages to its beginning, that Music or more accurately its germ, goes back to an extremely remote period in the development of the human race, probably originating with the rhythmic repetition of percussive sounds (for I hold that the beginning was rhythm) which, stimulating the nerves and the imaginations of the performers," led them to the utterance of more or less musical howls. This led eventually to the discovery that howls could be uttered in differing pitches. This again led to the further discovery that certain combinations and sequences of pitch were more agreeable or stimulating

than others, thus laying the foundations of primitive scales, which, being controlled by rythms, gave rise, in time, to the creation of crude melodic forms. Under the non-evolutionary theory, this manifestation already constituted "Art," complete in itself and incapable of improvement. To carry this theory to its logical conclusion, it follows that these thumpers and howlers of the Pleistocene era had already produced works of "Art" worthy of taking their place besides those of a Palestrina, a Bach, or a Wagner! This is, of course, a "*reductio ad absurdum*," but I think it illustrates the point in question.

I take it rather that "Music" as we at the present understand it is of recent growth in comparison with the older Arts — literature, sculpture and pictorial representation — whose history we can trace back to remote periods indeed. We still admire, not to say revere, the literature, sculpture, and such remnants of paintings, as have remained to us, of the ancient Greeks; but I strongly suspect that if we could to-day be treated to a concert by Grecian musicians, chanting "Odes to the Gods" on Grecian scales in consecutive fourths, fifths and octaves (their reputed harmonic method) and accompanied may be by twangling four or seven stringed lyres, duplex reed pipes and cymbals, our aroused emotions would in all probability be either suicidal, or else of that variety which would tempt us to throw bricks at the "artists." I remember, as a lad, hearing an exposition of the style myself. One day, at a little seaside town in England, where I was spending some summer weeks with my parents, we heard approaching from the distance a series of the most dismal sounds imaginable, which, as they came nearer, we were able finally to diagnose as the rendering of "Home, Sweet Home" in the "Grecian mode," performed by four tatterdemalion waifs, father, mother, son and small daughter. Their scoring of the melody was in two groups of perfect fifths an octave apart. I do not know whether this should be called "Art," but it certainly produced such an effect of utter, and hopeless, despair that they departed with a goodly harvest of pennies wrung from the hearts (and pockets) of their anguished and sympathetic hearers!

No! I don't think that that which we know as "music" to-day goes back even as far as the Old Greeks. Music, being as it is, the most abstract, elusive, and subtle of the arts — it follows that those mental and psychic faculties which made possible its creation and reception must have been among the latest to develop. Even

at the present time there are numbers of intelligent individuals whose only conception of music is that of a more or less agreeable rhythmic noise, and who are quite incapable of ratiocination in terms of musical thought.

All manifestations of the life principle are subject to the law of evolution towards higher and more complex forms. It therefore follows that the Arts, being one of the manifestations, cannot be exempt from the law which governs all. Of course, it is obvious that within certain limits the mere accident of date has little or nothing to do with artistic value. There are great composers of the 16th and 17th Centuries. There are also extremely bad ones of the 19th and 20th. But, if we impartially compare the best music of the earlier period with the best of the latter, we must perforce admit that growth has taken place, manifesting itself in widened horizons, in new tone colorations, in greater freedom of form and movement, in functional complexity; in short, in evolution towards higher organization, capable of a response to an ever increasing number of mental and psychical urges. Who can deny that a symphony, let us say, by Haydn, beautiful and perfect of its type as it is, is not limited in scope when brought into juxtaposition with one by Brahms or Cesar Franck? True it is, that a masterwork will always remain a masterwork. When masterminds are born, they manifest themselves in terms of greatness using the materials with which their environment has supplied them. But the further we go back in time, the scarcer becomes that available supply! I do not believe that individual composers have become greater; but I *do* hold that through the accumulated work and experiences of a long line of great musicians and musical thinkers, *Music itself* has grown, throwing down new roots into the depths and new branches into the heights of the soul of Humanity.

HENRY SUCH

WRIT IN BRASS

JOHN KEATS, *By Amy Lowell. With illustration. Two volumes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925. \$12.50.*

In her preface to the two ponderous volumes of her work on John Keats, Miss Lowell says that she was moved to undertake the book chiefly in order to make accessible to students the large amount

of new material "uncharted and almost unexplored in the libraries of American collectors," and also because "the twentieth century has been silent in regard to Keats. Yet a great poet has something to give to every generation, and it has seemed to me time that mine . . . should put its particular view on record." There can be no question but that the author has admirably fulfilled her first purpose in writing this biography. She appears to have spared no pains to come at every scrap of published and unpublished poems, letters, reminiscences, and similar source-material which can throw light upon the minutest details of Keats' living and dying, upon the influences that shaped his work, the method he employed, and the motives that prompted him. The book is a superb example of scholarship, and must take its place on the reference shelves of all students of the poet and his period.

With regard to her secondary object, Miss Lowell has been successful almost in spite of herself. Her concern, after all, was with matters of interest to research workers and collectors. There is no greater paradox in literary history than the fact that Keats, who died believing his name to be writ in water, should have almost every day of his life brought up for minute scrutiny a century after his passing. But the reader cannot help wondering what service it does the poet for one to know whether a certain line was written on a Monday or a Friday, whether this or that Maecenas was on such a date the owner of a certain book one in Keats' own small library, or exactly what was the post-mark on a scribbled note. Miss Lowell goes into such things with the earnestness of a bibliographer and gives reasons for her conclusions like a lawyer summing up evidence. This is all valuable enough in an erudite study of the poet's work, but it is somewhat in the way of one's view of his personality. The reader is continually put off by Miss Lowell's excuses for the construction of her chapters, her sequences, and transitions, and the frequent intrusion of the biographer is a diversion to which twentieth century biographies have disaccustomed us.

The frankly academic method employed by Miss Lowell gives the book a flavor not of this generation. The reader who looks for the winged fluency of a Maurois, of the dry bouquet of a Strachey will be heartily disappointed. And yet it is not simply because of her Freudian slang that Miss Lowell's work will "date" as of our own time. One of the most notable contributions of the book is the author's championship of Fanny Brawne, — a championship

that only a twentieth century woman could have been wise and bold and kind enough to undertake. One may disagree with Miss Lowell on several counts, — surely her cavalier treatment of Shelley reflects upon her taste and judgment—but one must be grateful to her for the plausible and enriching portrait she gives us of the maligned girl who was Keats' promised wife. Miss Lowell has, as she set out to do, brought "back into existence the place, the time, and the society in which Keats moved." In view of her double purpose it is remarkable that she should have been able to fulfill so well the proper task of the biographer, — that of seeing a man steadily and seeing him whole.

THE WRITER AS WITNESS

LETTERS ON THE SHORT STORY, THE DRAMA AND OTHER LITERARY TOPICS. *By Anton Chekhov. Selected and edited by Louis S. Friedland. New York, Minton, Balch & Co., 1924.*

Readers of this selection from Chekhov's voluminous correspondence will taste a thin broth, not without a grain of salt in it, and, among the various ingredients, here and there a piece of meat. There are comments on Chekhov's own stories and plays, as well as on the work of predecessors and contemporaries, native and foreign; data for the history of his texts; material chiefly of biographical interest; opinions on the drama and the theatre; notes on literary technique; and some casual philosophizing. He was not a particularly felicitous letter-writer, and he was certainly no critic. His defection in the latter regard is acknowledged in this volume both by the novelist and his editor. Many of the pages will prove flat to the American public because the references are so often to writing of which they have no knowledge and concerning which the letters offer small enlightenment. Here and there, however, the charm of Chekhov's personality, and the refreshing sense of having to do with a wholesome, honest and humane intelligence, make for real satisfaction.

What I specially value in the book is the man's extraordinarily lucid presentation of the theory of objectivity in literature. The writer's business, as he sees it, is to be neither a judge nor an advocate,

but merely a witness at the bar of life, pledged to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about such facts as come within the limited field of his personal vision. He waives the right too accuse, to excuse, or to condemn. Obviously, this is at once a credo and an apologia pro arte sua. Yet the story-teller was sensible of the fact that this is not the highest form of art. "Let me remind you," he says, "that the writers who we say are for all time or are simply good, and who intoxicate us, have one common and very important characteristic; they are going towards something and are summoning you towards it, too, and you feel not with your mind but with your whole being, that they have some object, just like the ghost of Hamlet's father, who did not come and disturb the imagination for nothing. Some have more immediate objects—the abolition of serfdom, the liberation of their country, politics, beauty, or simply vodka, like Denis Davidov; others have remote objects—God, life beyond the grave, the sense of humanity, and so on. The best of them are realists and paint life as it is, but through every line's being soaked in the consciousness of an object you feel, besides life as it is, the life which ought to be, and that captivates you." Chekhov himself did not paint life as it ought to be, but he spoke from the witness-stand as damningly as a Cicero, as tenderly as a Portia.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

THE MATRIARCH, by G. B. Stern, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.—Miss Stern's matriarch deserves the term no more than do all other imperious, meddlesome, and sentimental old women who exaggerate the importance of family unity because it suits their fancy, and who possess sufficient personal charm and intellectual vigor to dominate the males of the family — and thereby the less assertive females. In a sense, therefore, Miss Stern demonstrates the thesis of her novel by an obvious *tour de force*. As a further material flaw, her view of heredity is not quite in accord with the latest theory of the subject: it is too rigorous. However, despite these substantial limitations and despite the fact that the ending of the story is very easily foreseen, Miss Stern's style has a brilliance and a persuasiveness that lure and hold the reader. He cares not if the glitter of this same style comes from a consciously constructed cleverness; in fact he finds it quite pleasurable. Nor does he object to the loose method of presentation, for the canvas is large, the characters many and interesting, and the story of a kind that appears best in mosaic dress. What he is interested in chiefly is the picturesque array of characters, and here Miss Stern has not failed. They come rushing to embrace him one after the other and several at a time, from Babette who first eats ham at eighty-one to Toni who heads the present generation. These people, at the same time quaint and bizarre and unique, are human enough and important enough to outweigh more than all the defects that one might find with the author's thesis and technique.

MOSES, by Lawrence Langner, New York: Boni and Liveright. — This is a sophisticated age and consequently there is no room today for gods or saints. Gods are easily destroyed, as Abraham had once had occasion to demonstrate, but saints, as it had often been pointed out, achieve immortality though they be crucified, burned, or denied. Hence the urge to humanize them. "Moses" by Lawrence Langner is the outgrowth of that urge. The author states in his introduction: "We no longer accept Moses as a man; he has become a tradition, a legendary figure." And Mr. Langner boldly set out to pull off the trappings and reveal the man. He succeeded in giving us a man not very unlike Sumner. Moses believes that men cannot be ruled by love, but must be ruled by laws. It is evident that author was determined to leave no reasonable doubt about Moses' humanity; and the safest method was to endow him with qualities that are unmistakably human. Thus Moses must be selfish and narrow. He cannot object to graven images out of a breadth of vision. The Moses of the Bible is very convincing. Mr. Langner gives us a type, the kind that can be found in any community. And at the end: "Moses a lonely broken old man watches them pass into the Promised Land — Curtain." A Langner's Mose would, of course, grow old and feeble and presumably die of old age; but for a Moses who is remembered long enough for Mr. Langner to write about him, such an ending sounds as convincing as a story about a Christ who died of fright at the sight of a Roman soldier. The play suffers because quite an ordinary man was substituted for a legendary figure without compensating us for the legends or even explaining them.

The GUARDIAN

GOLD BY GOLD. By *Herbert S. Gorman*. New York. Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.—

If James Joyce's "Ulysses" had given birth to an ugly duckling, it could not have been in better shape than "Gold by Gold." Last year Herbert Gorman set to work to read "Ulysses." He knew James Joyce from "Exiles" and "The Dubliners." He studied him even more closely in "Ulysses," and wrote a comprehensive analysis of the volume. This year he presents a novel which in amount is scarcely a third of "Ulysses," which does not take place within one day, nor symbolize a man's body; yet this production is so similar to its parent in so many ways that the resemblance is too striking to be called only an effect. Gorman's book is an offspring, but like so many children, it inherits none of the father's genius. It has many inherited traits — in pages about the thought processes of a street woman it discourses without a punctuation mark; it lapses into expressions of thought which are merely photographs of what may be passing through the brain; it deals with intimacies of the body that "Ulysses" abounded in. Here and there it has a few good strong touches of its own. Once Herbert Gorman succeeds in throwing off the cloak of "Ulysses" he may produce a good book of his own. In "Gold by Gold," however, his master's voice is much too apparent.

ILIANA. *Stories of a Wandering Race.* By *Konrad Bercovici*. New York: Boni Liveright. \$2.00.—Here are eleven tales gathered into a volume because all had been given the highest, or three-star, ranking in Edward J. O'Brien's annual summary of American short stories for 1924. Bercovici deals with the wanderers of the world, gypsies of the Balkans predominating. His method of presentation in these tales — they lack the "form" often considered essential to short stories — is at times tedious, because of its indirectness. One would like more often to meet his characters face to face. And in many cases these tales start off as if seeking, rather than building up, an idea. Their charm lies as much in subject-matter as in handling, for the care and fine modelling that make gem-like beauty are too seldom present.

HOW TO SEE MODERN PICTURES. By *Ralph M. Pearson*. New York: Dial Press. \$2.50.—This is an excellent primer in viewing pictures, contributing a firm basis for an intelligent approach and a trustworthy judgment. It is of equal importance to the person who thinks modernists are irresponsible fools or charlatans and to the person more favorably responsive to their work. It will help toward a critical selection.

PRISONERS, by *Franz Molnar*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., \$2.50.—There is no leavening here of Molnar's trite benevolence and his conventional disavowal of conventions. His characters are hedged in with platitudinous commentary upon them. The author's sentimentality, concealed in his plays by the deftness of a clever playwright, here simpers and cries loud. The humanitarian's conceit can be most offensive.